Life on the Red Rock Ranch, 1931-1965: An Interview with Judie Dickinson

Interviewee: Judie Dickinson
Interviewed: 1985
Published: 1986
Interviewer: N. J. Broughton
UNOHP Catalog #135

Description

Silver and cattle have been central parts of Nevada's image of itself since territorial days. With the rise of casino gambling following World War II, mining and ranching lost their dominant positions in the state's economy. However, they continue to provide the citizens of Nevada with an identity rooted in stereotypes which are generally accepted as representative of masculine frontier virtues.

Ironically, while it may be true that mining was almost entirely a male endeavor, cattle ranching as practiced in Nevada has always included participation by women in a broad range of vital tasks. Women on ranches customarily have handled many managerial and accounting responsibilities, in addition to putting in long hours of manual labor. The mustached, mounted buckaroo as the symbol of ranch life in the Great Basin is colorful but misleading. In this 1985 oral history, a woman who lived and worked on one of Nevada's oldest ranches for over thirty years discusses ranching from the female perspective.

Judie Dickinson was born in 1909 in Blaine, Washington. In 1931 she married Lawrence Dickinson, whose family purchased in 1851 much of the land upon which the Red Rock ranch is situated. Together, the Dickinsons operated the ranch until 1965. In her oral history, Mrs. Dickinson principally recalls events, people, customs and ranch practices that give the reader a better understanding not only of the role of women on a typical ranch, but of the social context in which a ranch operates. Mrs. Dickinson also discusses a variety of additional topics, including family history, the changing nature of Reno over time, and Indian-white relations. The result is a useful contribution to the record of ranching history, women's roles and the development of Washoe County in the twentieth century.

Those readers interested primarily in the Red Rock ranch are directed to this work's companion volume, *Life on The Red Rock Ranch, 1904-1965: An Interview with Lawrence A. Dickinson*.

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An Oral History Conducted by N. J. Broughton

University of Nevada Oral History Program

Publication Staff:
Director: R.T. King

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Preface to the Digital Edition

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the "uhs," "ahs," and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete…or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at http://oralhistory.unr.edu/.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

Original Preface

The University of Nevada Oral History Program (OHP) engages in systematic interviewing of persons who can provide firsthand descriptions of events, people and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiographical synthesization as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the OHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the OHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often totally unreadable and therefore a total waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the OHP will, in preparing a text:

a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled;

b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context; and

d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered

but have been added to render the text intelligible. There will be readers who prefer to take their oral history straight, without even the minimal editing that occurred in the production of this text; they are directed to the tape recording.

Copies of all or part of this work and the tape recording from which it is derived are available from:

The University of Nevada
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Mailstop 0324
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Introduction

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Ironically, while it may be true that mining was almost entirely a male endeavor, cattle ranching as practiced in Nevada has always included participation by women in a broad range of vital tasks. Women on ranches customarily have handled many managerial and accounting responsibilities, in addition to putting in long hours of manual labor. The mustached, mounted buckaroo as the symbol of ranch life in the Great Basin is colorful but misleading. In this 1985 oral history, a woman who lived and worked on one of Nevada's oldest ranches for over 30 years discusses ranching from the female perspective.

In 1931 Judie Dickinson married Lawrence Dickinson, whose family purchased in 1851 much of the land upon which the Red Rock ranch is situated. Together, the Dickinsons operated the ranch until 1965. In her oral history, Mrs. Dickinson principally recalls events, people, customs and ranch practices that give the reader a better understanding not only of the role of women on a typical ranch, but also of the social context in which a ranch operates. Guided by interviewer Nancy Broughton, Mrs. Dickinson discusses a variety of additional topics, including family history, the changing nature of Reno over time, Indian-white relations and other subjects. The result is a useful contribution to the record of ranching history, women's roles and the development of Washoe County in the twentieth century.

This oral history should properly be considered as one of a continuing series of primary source interviews in the economic and social history of Nevada cattle ranching. A number of such oral histories are included

in the collection of the university of Nevada Oral History Program. Those readers interested primarily in the Red Rock ranch are directed to this work's companion volume, Life on The Red Rock Ranch, 1904-1965: An Interview with Lawrence A. Dickinson.

R. T. King
December 1986

Judie Dickinson
1986

Life on the Red Rock Ranch, 1931-1965: An Interview with Judie Dickinson

R.T. King: Mrs. Dickinson, we're going to be talking about the events that led to your coming to the Red Rock ranch in Nevada and your marrying Mr. Dickinson, but before we go into that I'd like to know some background on you and your family. You told me that you were born in Blame, Washington. Were your parents American citizens?

Judie Dickinson: Not at that time, no. My father came over to the United States as a young boy, and his father took out citizenship papers which included his family. But before my father was 21 he returned to Ireland.So that cancelled his citizenship.

Do you know about when your grandfather and father came from Ireland?

I couldn't tell you. I know my father was just a young boy, and he died when he was 86 years old—when my son was 2.

Did your grandmother also come, or was it just your grandfather and your father?

No, he brought his family.

Do you know your grandfather's and grandmother's names?

No, I don't. My father's name was Maxwell Johnston.

Do you know the year he was born?

Well....

You said your father lost his citizenship by going back to Ireland. Do you know why that was?

Because he wasn't born here.

Oh, one of the conditions was that he wasn't to go back?

Yes.

Why did he go back to Ireland?

Well, I guess just to see the family and to see if he wanted to live there or here. By that

time he was an older teenager—17, 18 years old. But Grandad came over and settled in Illinois.

Do you know where in Illinois?

No, I don't. My father went back to Ireland and married my mother. My father and one of his brothers went back to Ireland. And after he went back, why, he bought a small farm in County Cork and met my mother, and they were married in Ireland.

What's your mother's name?

My mother's name was Margeret McKnapp [pronounced k-napp]

Do you know when she was born?

No.

When did they return to the United States?

They returned to the United States in, oh, about 1890.

Did they come to Illinois to be with your grandfather?

Yes, they came to Illinois for a very short time, and then my mother had some of her family that had settled in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. So they went up there. My father was in the ranching up there.

And that's what his father was, a farmer, also?

Yes.

Was your mother from a farm family?

Yes. I guess that's approximately all they did back in Ireland.

So then your parents moved to Edmonton, Canada.

Alberta, Canada. And from there, after they had 4 children—they had 2 living and 2 had passed away up there— then they moved down to Blame, Washington. My sister was born 2 years before I was...the one that was just older than I. The other 2 were quite a few years older. We lived in Washington. When I was just a small baby they moved to Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, where I started school.

Now, when your father moved to Blame, what did he do there?

Carpenter work.

Did he work for a company, or did he have his own business there?

No, I think he had his own business.

How big was Blame then?

I have no idea, but just a small little.... I went back to Blame when I was about 13. My sister took a trip and we went back, and she tried to show me the home that I was born in. They had made it into a barn, and she was just brokenhearted.

I'll bet. Did your father do carpentry work for homeowners or ranchers or...?

No, I think people that wanted a custom home built then, they'd contract him to build

a house for them. Of course, they weren't homes like today, either.

Did your parents have any children who were born in Ireland, or were all the children born in Edmonton?

No. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

And 2 of the children died.

Yes. The 2 that were living, that came down to the United States when they moved down, were both born in Edmonton, Alberta.

What were their names?

Myrtle and Pearl.

When were you born?

I was born in 1909. I have a sister that was born in 1907.

What was her name?

Orbie.

Were there just the 4 girls in your family?

Yes. We'd moved to Vancouver Island when I was just a small baby, and I started school in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island. And my sister [Orbie] and I, the 2 of us—Mother held my sister back one year because we had 3 miles to walk each way to school, and she didn't want her going alone. So she held her back and started me a year early so we could go together. They kept my sister out of school one year till she was 7, and then they started me when I was 5. It was 2 years difference in our age.

Was this a small country school?

Yes.

How many students were in it?

Oh, the whole school...I used to have a picture of them...but there were about 15, 16 in the school, through eighth grade.

How many teachers?

Just one. But Mother was so afraid to have my sister and I walking the 3 miles to school, and Vancouver Island then was mostly old Chinese, and they mined coal for England. And so Mother talked my father into moving to Tacoma. My 2 older sisters had come down to the United States, and they were in Tacoma working.

Did the Chinese cause a lot of problems for the whites?

They used to stop us on the road. And we used to get into trouble because, in those days, we always would laugh and say, "Chinky, chinky Chinaman, sitting on a rail. Along came a Dutchman, and chipped off his tail!" because Canada made them cut their hair.

Did you sing that out to the Chinese as you went by?

Oh, sure.

Were you ever accosted by any of them, or did they just stop you?

We were accosted by them a couple of times.

What would happen?

Someone would run for help. They would stop us, and then they wanted us to go with them. And that worried Mother nearly to death. There was an awful lot of white slavery. Vancouver, itself, predominantly...why, and they would ship out the white girls, ship them to China for white slavery.

So your mother did not want you walking to school because she was afraid of white slavery?

She was scared to death, yes.

That's when you moved to Tacoma?

That's why they moved to Tacoma, yes. But, evidently, when we moved to Tacoma, Canada was in World War I, and it took my father 6 months to get permission to leave Canada because, I guess, he was of the draft age, or they could have drafted him, or they wanted his farming. I don't know. But I know that he was 6 months getting permission. And we came down in 1915 to Tacoma, and my father worked in the shipyards.

What did he do there?

I couldn't tell you. All I know is that he worked in the shipyards. We lived in Tacoma until I was 10 when we moved to Sumner, or the Puyallup Valley in Washington that's halfway between Tacoma and Seattle. As children, why, we all worked in the cannery or picked berries.

How old were you then?

Well, just from 10 up.

You did this in the summers?

Yes. And then after school if the cannery needed help, like for pears, and late in the autumn, why, at 8:00 in the morning they'd blow their whistle, and you could hear it all over the valley. That meant for any housewife or anyone, they all would go in and help harvest the crop.

Those that could go.

Yes. So after school, then we'd go down and work in the cannery till 7:00. They didn't let children work after 7:00.

Did you get paid for your work?

Yes, but very little. On a real good day we made a dollar—about 25¢ an hour.

What kinds of things did you do?

Well, we sorted the fruit—they had the children sort the fruit. As I got a little older, why, we'd peel the pears, and for a big cannery box, why, we received 11¢ to peel a box of pears.

How did you peel those? I know how you peel them when you do them in your kitchen.

That's the way you peeled them. They had little peelers. They didn't have anything automatic at that time.

But it made some spending money for you then.

That's right, and we bought our own clothes.

You did?

Everything was hard times. We didn't have very much.

Now, did you <u>have</u> to work? Did your parents make you work, or was it something you wanted to do?

Everybody worked. Even the dentists' wives and everything. When that whistle would blow, they'd all go down to help preserve the fruit.

Did you like that—were the conditions good, or did you just not think about it?

Well, I guess all the children did it, and you just accepted it.

In 1922 I started high school in Sumner. And in 1924, I moved in with my cousin in Seattle. I had an aunt.. .1 had a very strange situation there. My father's people adopted a girl, I guess down in Illinois. She went to—I have to think of that a minute—Battle Creek, Michigan, and took medicine. But she was always considered my aunt. She was working in Seattle, and she had her office in her home, and I went to live with her and her sister—her maternal sister was considered my cousin, and the other sister was my aunt because she'd been adopted by the Johnstons.

What was your aunt's name?

Mamie MacLafferty—Doctor. She was a doctor for many years in Seattle. I went to her home to live, and she would go out at night to deliver babies. Many times she was there most of the night, and sometimes they'd offer her food and sometimes they wouldn't So when she would get a call to go out at night, I would get up and fix her a sandwich and something, fix her something to drink in, I guess, an old fruit jar or something. She'd take that with her, so in case they didn't offer her any food, she'd stay until the baby arrived.

Now, you were going to....

Lincoln High School in Seattle.

Why did you change? Why did you go there and not finish high school in Sumner?

Because she needed someone.

You just roomed with her?

Yes. Roomed and boarded with her.

Did you enjoy that?

Yes, very much.

Did you like Seattle compared to....

Oh, yes. Compared to Sumner, yes.

What was it about being in Seattle that was more enjoyable than being back home in Sumner?

Well, she had her large home, and we were always raised to be very close to Aunt Mamie. She had a beautiful home in Seattle, and I had a little more freedom there, I guess, too.

Oh, I'll bet. [laughter]

We lived about 3 blocks from Woodland Park which...a lot of visitors would go to Woodland Park.

When you were in high school, did you have any goals for yourself? Did you set a career goal for yourself?

Mother always taught me to be a schoolteacher. She had wanted to be a schoolteacher and never attained it because

of finances and all. So she talked [me into being] a schoolteacher. And I went back to Walla Walla College in eastern Washington after I finished high school, and I was there about 3 weeks when they put me into a fifth and sixth grade room to practice teaching—as they called it—to see how we liked it. The third day, I quit college.

I can imagine. [laughter]

I didn't like it at all.

Was Walla Walla College a 2-year teachers college?

Three year. I think it was 3 years before you got out.

Was it pretty much just a teachers college like they used to have?

No. They had lots of divisions, but it didn't cost as much to go to the teachers college.

How old were you now?

I was 17 when I finished high school.

What year was that?

Nineteen twenty-five. In 1926 on 3 January, I started nurse's training at Glendale, [California], and that was due to the influence of my aunt.

Let's back up just a minute, now. You went to Walla Walla, and after 3 weeks they put you in a fifth and sixth grade classroom.

Yes. For practice teaching.

Did you have that classroom all to yourself, or were you working with another teacher?

Well, the teacher would come and go.

So you were in charge of the classroom?

Oh, yes.

How many students did you have?

Oh, around, I think, l5 or 20.

Did you get much preparation for this?

Well, just the 3 weeks and they had us.... It was mostly reading and then reading their geometry and giving them homework to do. I didn't have anything in arithmetic. Now, whether that was in another room or what, I just don't recall.

And you just didn't take to it?

Not at all.

So then you decided to go into nursing school.

So 3 January 1926, I got a ride from a friend of a friend for $10 from Seattle to Los Angeles and went down and entered training. We had classes at 8:30 in the morning— 8:30 to 12:30 we had classes. Then we were to study 4 hours, and 4 hours of floor duty, and that took up the 12 hours.

Was this a hospital-teaching situation combined?

Yes. Glendale Sanitarium and Hospital. We were paid 20¢ an hour for the hours that

we worked on the floor, and that gave us our spending money. Then we bought meal tickets for $5 a ticket. Usually, 3 a month was enough, but we all tried to diet so we'd have more spending money. That was a very foolish thing that they had planned for the students, really, because several of the girls really dieted until they were undernourished, trying to have more spending money.

What would have remedied that?

Well, just pay them [more] or give us so much a month and then give their food.

Yes, so you had to buy your food and any entertainment that you had on 20c an hour.

Yes, and the first year they held out $10 a month for tuition and our 2 uniforms. We did our own laundry and ironing. Our 4 hours studying was usually 6:30 to 8:30 in the morning and then what time we put in in the evening. But we had to keep track of every minute, practically, that we studied, because they wanted us to have 4 hours of homework.

No matter what.

Yes. But they weren't bad about when we wanted to work it in. We could either get up early and do it, or we could stay up a little while. But we had to be in the dormitory by 9:00 P.M.

Good old curfew. [laughter]

Yes. Good old curfew.

Was that true on weekends, too?

Well, Sunday they weren't quite so strict with us, but we had to check in and out of where we were going and when we'd be back, because we were just young girls many miles from home.

What prompted you to go to Glendale to school?

The state of Washington—and Oregon—you couldn't, at that time, enter the nurse's training unless you were 19, and I was underage.

Did your aunt help you get in school at all?

Yes. She contacted the doctor. See, this was the Seventh Day Adventist hospital, and she had graduated from Battle Creek. That was a Seventh Day Adventist hospital. So she contacted one of the doctors down there that had finished with her.

When you were growing up, were you brought up in any particular religion?

Yes. Seventh Day Adventist. Many people feel that they [Seventh Day Adventists] didn't eat meat and they didn't do this and they didn't do that, but my folks were very moderate minded, and so we didn't abide by all of the strict rules. My father believed in being moderate in all things, and that's the way I was raised. But when we were in training, the patients were not allowed to give us any tips regardless of what we did for them, but they would take us out for dinner and things like that.

They could do that, but they couldn't give you gifts of money?

No. And once in a while when they would leave the hospital, why, they knew we were so short of money that they would give us hosiery or a slip or....

So they could get around certain things?

When they left, yes.

Why could you accept a gift like that if they wanted, but no monetary gifts?

I couldn't tell you other than that they thought maybe they would use that against us or something.

Well, when you work for the state or county here, you can't accept things, either.

See, it was a sanitarium, and we had many heart patients and cancer patients and people with strokes that would be in there 3 and 4 months, and some of them longer.A few of the very, very wealthy families would, instead of putting people...at that time to my knowledge, there wasn't such a thing as a nursing home.... They just put them in the sanitarium, and they were up and around. They [administration] didn't want tips because then they felt they'd [patients] ask favors of us, and [we] didn't have the time.

I finished my training in 1929. It was a 3 1/2 year course, instead of the 4 years which most people required. But we could put in extra hours if we wanted to.

Extra work hours?

Yes.

And that would help you get through, because the work was part of your course work,in a sense?

That's right. And we had to affiliate at 4 hospitals—go over there. The children's hospital in Hollywood—I was there 3 months, and Los Angeles County Hospital 2 months for ambulance service, and then I went to San Diego—Sun Hospital I think it was called—for doctor's office training. So that put in our whole case, of course.

Now, what did you see yourself as doing when you got your nursing degree? Did you plan to go back to Washington, or did you like southern California and plan to stay there?

No, I liked southern California, and every time we had an opportunity at all we'd go to the beach down there. I enjoyed it very much, and by that time, I'd gotten kind of weaned away from home. When I finished, there were 4 of us finished within just a few days of each other, and we rented an apartment together.

Now, when you say finished within a few days, you weren't on a strict semester then?

No. Our senior year when we got in so many hours.... I took the California state board in October, but they didn't let anyone know if they had finished until after Christmas, because they didn't want to.... But we were allowed to work as a registered nurse until we heard whether we had passed or not. If we didn't pass, we were allowed to take the state examination 3 times, and there were a few that had to take it more times. But not too many, really.

Did you pass yours the first time?

Yes. So then when I finished, they called me on a case out in Ontario, California. It was an elderly woman with thyroid problems; she was 76 years old. I went on what they call

20-hour duty. I got the afternoons off, and they were allowed to call us from 8:00 P.M. to 8 A.M., 4 times. And that made up the 20 hours.Other than that, why, we worked from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Now, did you live in the house with this woman?

I lived in the home, yes. And for this work I got $10 a day and meals, and then I had a cot in the patient's room, because she was allowed to call us. When she had surgery, why, they called in another 12-hour nurse, and we each took 12-hour duty—$6 a shift.

That lasted for 3 weeks, and then I went back onto the 20-hour duty. I was there until Christmastime, and at Christmastime I moved back with the girls in the apartment in Glendale. But with my money, of course, I wasn't out a dime all the time I was there at her home, and so I paid down on a Model A Ford—a sport coupe.

What year?

That was in 1930.

So it would have been a 1930 model?

Yes. Model A Ford.

Boy, I'll bet that was something.

Oh, and at that time I got 20 miles to the gallon with the car.

Do you remember the original price of the car and how much you put down on it?

I paid $700 or $800 for the car.

Totally?

Yes. But I got 20 miles to the gallon of gasoline, and I got 6 gallons for a dollar.I remember that very well.

I'll bet. [laughter]

So after I bought the car, why, just a few days later, I went to Hollywood to learn to drive, and I drove up there in the Hollywood hills. I remember one day that the engine died, and I didn't know what in the world to do, and I just let the car roll back to the car behind me to hold me on the hill. And, oh, talk about a mad man. He just really chewed me out. [laughter]

Now, when you say you went to Hollywood to learn to drive, did you have an instructor, or you just got in the car...

No, they helped me, I think, one or 2 days or 2 or 3 days or something...a few hours.

They being the auto people from whom you bought the car?

Yes.

Did you have to have a driver's license at this time?

No, I don't think we had a driver's license. I don't remember. Of course, they didn't really have anything registered at that time...for a little while.

Yes.

Then the 4 of us that lived together drove up to the state of Washington.One girl lived in Lodi, [California]. We let her out at Lodi, and we let another girl out at Salem, Oregon. And the other 2, we went on up to Washington.

To visit your parents and family?

Yes. We stayed there 3 weeks or 2 weeks.

I bet that was a fun trip!

Yes. Then we went back to work again.

Did you pick up the other 2 girls on the way home?

Yes, we picked them up on the way back. During this time, before I left down in Los Angeles, I met a girl by the name of Charlotte Knox, and we'd see each other frequently. She was not a nurse. She had taken a business course. We'd fill the car every minute that we weren't working—at that time we worked the 12 hours, after I left the elderly woman—and we'd fill the car with as many as could get in it, and we'd drive to Santa Monica and stay all day. Then we'd work all night on a special case. And we'd sleep on the beach.

While I was chumming with her, why, her cousin, Lawrence Albert Dickinson, drove down to visit the Knox family. That was her cousin, her mother's sister's boy. He came down for the winter. His folks wanted to find out if he wanted to stay on the ranch and work with his father—he was the only boy; he had one sister—or if he wanted to do something else. Charlotte's father had a contract that was after the earthquake in Los Angeles that had demolished so many of the schools.

Do you know when about that was?

Well, it would be 1930, 1929. It demolished a lot of the schools, and he had the contract [to rebuild]. And so my boyfriend—my husband now—he worked with his uncle, Harry Knox. He was timekeeper, and he would also survey the land and set them out and stuff like that.

Now, was he not sure if he wanted to be on the ranch, or was it his folks thought it was a good idea?

The folks thought it was a good idea.

Then he would be sure if he decided?

Yes. He had finished [high] school here in Reno. So he lived with Uncle Harry Knox and Sophia [Petersen], which was Charlotte's mother; we all called her Polly.And 13 February I met him, so always made it a joke that it was the thirteenth that.... [laughter] We started going together practically steady at the beginning.

How did you meet?

Well, she just had me over, or I stopped by or something, and he was there for dinner.

He just happened to be there?

Yes. When he left Reno, he had an old, old car. I couldn't tell you what make it was, but his dad said that he didn't know if the old car would make the trip to Los Angeles or not. So they traded cars for the time that he was gone, and he had a brand-new Hupmobile Cabriolet. Of course that really.. I just felt that was absolutely wonderful.

That was one of the cars of the era, wasn't it, that Hupmobile?

Yes.

Are you sure you didn't like his car?

Well, I suppose I did at first. [laughter] But he fit in good with the crowd, too. And the girls, he was just like a brother to the other girls. Most of us were working nights at that time—7:00 to 7:00—and we'd go down to the beach every afternoon. He'd get off work... Harry would usually let him off about 1:00, and so then we'd go down to the beach. So then when he left down there—he left about Eastertime; I don't know exactly—but he decided he'd come back up here and stay. He said, "I have something to tell you." He said, "I'm going to go back up to the ranch and live there." And he wanted me to get married and come up with him.

Now, set the scene for me here. Where were the 2 of you when he asked you?

I don't know. We used to go up a lot and park on the Hollywood hills and overlook all of Hollywood and part of L.A. We'd sit up there and talk for quite a while.

Anyway, he wanted me to come home with him, and I told him that I just couldn't. I had the sister [Orbie] that was 2 years older than I am; she quit high school and got married, and she had a couple of children by that time and was very, very unhappy. I told him that my folks taught us never to get a divorce. That was very much out. So I told him that I would come up to Reno and work a year, and if he still wanted to get married and I did, too, why, then we could be married. So I came up. First, Charlotte and I drove up for a weekend on 22 May, which was my birthday, and Dick gave me a diamond while we were here.

When he told you he was going back to Reno and to the ranch, did you have any idea he was going to ask you to marry him?

Yes. I felt that he....

Had you sat down and discussed it or anything?

No, not really. I just figured that we would marry someday, though, but I'd thought down there, of course. But I knew his folks lived in Reno and they were on a ranch.

Did you know much about what ranching was all about?

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. He said he was out of town, and I didn't know if I'd be lonesome or just how it would work. So Charlotte and I drove up for the weekend of 22 May in the Ford, and that's when he gave me the diamond, and then we decided that 4 July I'd come up to live and work in Reno. I took her back and I was on a case that I told him that I had a few days off.

When you decided to come up and live in Reno, was your intention to get, say, a nursing job in town and to live in town and then see him when you 2 could get together?

That's right. I lived with his aunt and uncle. Aunt Clara—the Petersen girl, the youngest one—had married Mr. [Cyril] Knox, a brother. [The original Danish family name of Pedersen was changed to the English spelling of Petersen by Sophus Petersen.] The 2 sisters married 2 brothers.

Clara Petersen in Reno had married a brother to Charlotte's father down in L.A.?

Yes. They were brothers and sisters.

Do you remember where they lived?

Yes, 79 Keystone.

Down along the river, that would be?

Yes, almost. So I lived with them and got a job, and as soon as I was paid and had enough money, why, I got an apartment. I think I stayed with them about 2 months. And then I got a room at the old Frandsen Apartments on Fourth Street. They're still there I think.

When you got a job, was it a nursing job?

Oh, yes. I worked at Saint Mary's [Hospital].

What did you do there?

I took special duty, and I worked in surgery, also, at different times. At that time, whenever anyone would have surgery or something, they'd have 2 special nurses for a week or so. We'd work the 7:00 to 7:00.

Did you ever work with Dr. Fred Anderson there during this time?

Yes, I did.

Can you tell me about Dr. Anderson, what you remember of him, and how he was to work with?

Yes. He was very nice, but very quiet. He didn't have much to say to the....He'd come in; he'd talk to the patients and all and leave the orders for the day or the night. He was very thorough in his directions of what he wanted done for the patients, but as far as visiting or something.... Now, maybe it was because I was a little shy, too.

You found him a good doctor to work with?

Oh, yes. Very good, because he gave such thorough instructions.

[I] took special duty at Saint Mary's until 1936, off and on, even after we were married. Dick would eat with his folks after we married, and I'd go out to Red Rock ranch about twice a week. When the case finished, then I'd go back out there and stay a few days. I nursed for Dr. Brown, Dr. Robinson, Dr. Stadtherr, Dr. Morrison, Dr. Leners and Dr. Wyman. We called him young, of course, then—Dr. Lombardi; he was interning at Saint Mary's.

When you worked with Dr. Anderson or interacted with him, he would have been in surgery?

In surgery or specialist.

Let's back up a little bit to where you got your apartment.

Well, I stayed at just the 2 rooms until... wait a minute, I was called on a home case, a Mrs. [Pearl] Whitaker that lived on Seventh and Sierra. [Fred Whitaker ran a large cigar store on E. Fifth.] She'd had the measles and she doggone near died with them.She was about 56 or 57 then, and I stayed on with her days—12-hour days—and no days off for 2 months. Then about 13 January or right around in there, her uncle in Paradise Valley, out by Winnemucca, took sick. She asked me if I'd go out and take care of him. So I went out, and it was just nothing—no hospital—but a poorhouse at that time. There was nothing to do anything with; it was terrible.

This was in Winnemucca?

Yes.

Did you go out to a ranch there, or did you go to like a sanitarium or hospital?

No. At the hospital. Poorhouse was what it was. But other indigent people were there... elderly....

Where in Winnemucca was this hospital?

Well, just up on the hill about 6 blocks out of town, south and east, probably.

What did Mr. Dickinson think about your going to Winnemucca?

Well, he didn't like it very much, but Mrs. Whitaker wanted me to go, and we didn't think it would be very long. Her uncle was very, very ill, and I always laughed and said it was the good nursing, of course, that brought him... he made it fine. He worked at Paradise Valley on a ranch out there when he took sick, and he had never been married. He was a very elderly man... 70 or 75.

Do you remember his name?

Dick Smart. While I was there nursing, I met Martin Gastanaga that for many years owned the Eagle Thrifty here in town. At that time he was going with a girl by the name of Lola, and, oh, she had a couple of other boyfriends,also, and we all went out together. It wasn't a couple of couples at all. But he had the only drugstore in Winnemucca, and that's how I met him. I went down there for drugs, or I don't know just what.

And, of course, I had very little to do after I got off work, so I took sewing and tailoring from a woman by the name of Mayer. No, it wasn't her name, either. She was the mayor's wife, and I took sewing from her from 3 to 5 hours, and she charged me a dollar for sewing lessons.

Did you know how to sew before this?

Yes, I had taken sewing in high school, too.

Did you take sewing at this time partially to prepare for moving out to the ranch?

Yes, I made my trousseau.

Can I back up a minute? When Mr. Dickinson asked you to marry him, back in L.A., what was your reaction to that? What was your feeling, knowing that it would mean moving up to the ranch?

Well, I was very much for it, and I didn't mind going out on the ranch because we had been on farms out in Canada as a little kid. I don't know. I was more or less raised if you liked someone, you'd get along with him, and....

That was it. You were prepared for what ranch life was like because of your farm background?

Well, and then going out to Ontario [to care for the thyroid patient]. That was on a farm where she lived, too.

Did you discuss with Mr. Dickinson—then or also when you moved to Reno and you 2 would get together—what you would be doing, what your role would be?

Well, I saw his mother. Of course, I'd go out there and stay all night many times, or

stay a weekend or, as I say, 2 or 3 days between special duty nursing. I met his friends here in town, and we just more or less accepted it, I guess. All my life I've been a person that lived more or less day to day and enjoyed my life.

So knowing that you were going to someday be the mistress of the ranch, you paid attention...?

Well, I didn't think of it that way. His folks were living there; he worked with them and for them. And he had his own cattle. They gave him some cattle when he finished, I guess...well, even when he was going to high school. Every once in a while when his father was branding, he would brand an animal for Dick, and it was usually a heifer. So he was gradually building up his herd.

That was a lot of foresight. Did you have any reservations about moving onto a ranch where Mr. Dickinson's parents would be, and moving in with them?

No.

I know that was more common then than it is today.

Well, we lived with them for 6 months.

In the same house?

Yes. We were married in April—Easter Sunday, 1931—and we lived with his folks. About 2 miles from there his father had built a home for his father—elderly man Dickinson and his wife—years and years before. We always talked about moving that house up and fixing it up. We were sitting on the porch one day, and Mr. Dickinson said to me, he said, "Well, what do you want to do? Do you want to move that house up and fix it up for us, or do you want to go up home—up to your folks—this spring to visit?" Because we didn't have very much money.

So you could do one or the other.

I told him it didn't make any difference, that if he didn't move the house up I'd be home, anyway, because I was going home.

How did that go over?

Well, [in] 3 days he started moving the house! He came to Reno....

Now, this is the senior Mr. Dickinson?

No, that was my husband. He came to Reno and got in touch with a Mr. Bevilacqua, and they came right out and started moving the house.

How did they go about that?

Well, they put it up on stilts and pulled it... put it up on wheels and stilts. They had quite a time getting up through the lower end of what we called the meadow because the weight of the house... it was such a well-built home in those days.

Pulled it with horses?

Yes, and a truck. They had a truck at that time... 1931.

Did you go home then, too, to see your parents?

They brought the house up about...well, I made all the curtains and everything. We were all ready to move in, of course, and we

moved in just a few days before Christmas. Then early in the spring we drove up north and visited my folks.

When you got married, were you married on the ranch?

No, we were married at 79 Keystone here in Reno, Aunt Clara's home.

Did your parents come to the wedding?

No, my mother was very ill. My mother had cancer for years. She went down to Portland sanitarium and had radium at that time. I guess she was one of the first patients they'd given radium to, the way they talked at Portland, and they burned her kidney with it. So she had a backache the rest of her life.

I never remember Mother without a backache. But we girls had all left home, and my father did farming there and then some carpentry. He didn't hold a steady job after that; he helped her a great deal in the house.

I assume you wrote them and said that you were getting married. What was your parents' reaction?

My father believed in the old Irish tradition, and so Dick and I discussed it, and I told Dick to write my father and ask him if it was OK. So he wrote to my father and told him that he would like to marry me.

Did that impress your father?

Oh, yes, very much, because my sister's husband never did such a thing. He thought that was wonderful.

So they were happy for you then?

Yes.

What was it like...were you prepared for moving to Nevada?

Well, by that time we had to have a driver's license, too. Of course, we had a license on the car.

Let me ask this another way. Nevada's quite a shock to a lot of people who come here from greener areas. Some people never adjust. Was Nevada any shock to you, exactly?

When I first came up to visit, why, Dick looked out toward Pyramid Lake and he said, "Aren't the hills beautiful; isn't it beautiful?" because, you see, this was springtime. And I laughed, and I said, "Yes, Dick, they <u>would</u> be beautiful if they had some trees on them."

You were used to trees. [laughter]

But in just a little while I became accustomed to it.

Was it much different from Los Angeles?

Oh, yes, I should say. I laughed because they used to shut a gate and then put a horseshoe over the boards on the gate, and I had been used to, by that time, to the wonderful things that L.A. County and Glendale Sanitarium.... We had, I thought, everything to do <u>with</u>, and up here we didn't have anything. You just lived kind of primitive.

But you adjusted OK, and it wasn't any great disappointment or shock?

No, because I liked Dick's mother so much. She welcomed me, and she was so

thrilled to have Dick stay on the ranch and so protective of him and also protective of me. She taught me how to cook. We cooked and canned and dried fruit, worked in the garden.

Did you know how to cook when you went to the ranch?

Well, I had done quite a little bit at Aunt Mamie's, of course, in my junior and senior year. And then Mother being ill, my sister and I used to get breakfast and things like that... but not to really cook.

What was the reaction of your friends in Los Angeles to your marrying Mr. Dickinson?

They thought it was wonderful before—when I was just talking about leaving—because they all knew Dick and liked him. See, they had met him—all my close friends—and we all enjoyed it just as kids together, you might say. If I was working and didn't go to the beach, why, he'd take one of the other girls.

That's the way you did it back then.

Yes. There wasn't any of this real, I don't know... we had devotion for each other, too, but I understood that I was working and he went to the beach.

My parents talk about groups like that. They grew up like that, so I'm familiar with that philosophy.

Yes. But when I got ready to leave down there, why, they gave me a shower, of course. One girl—Helen Hanson was her name—told the other girls, she said, "If I were you, I wouldn't spend much. I'm not going to because," she said, "she's not going to be up there very long."

They didn't think you'd like it?

They gave me a year.

Were they all city girls?

No. You know a lot of the girls in those days came from little farms and places. And there were several girls from Bakersfield, [California] and around that area. Then there were some from out on the desert and.... We had dentists' daughters and...I mean, we were just a complete mixture, really.

Why would they think that you wouldn't make it?

Well, because they thought it was too primitive. And I'd gotten used to having this and having that.

City life.

Yes.

Well, that's understandable. But your family was for it? They were supportive?

Yes, very.

Now, Dick had described the ranch to you, I assume. When you and Charlotte drove up that first weekend, what was your reaction to seeing the ranch?

I don't know. I was so thrilled to see Dick again I didn't see the ranch. And I didn't see the work! [laughter] I was thrilled to ride horseback and go with him.

Did he take time off that weekend just to spend with you?

No, I don't think so. I think we went riding. He took me out to see the ranch.

Well, how big was the ranch then?

This is what it was when we sold. We sold in 1966.

For the tape let me describe that we are looking at a typed sheet of paper entitled, "Red Rock Cattle Ranch."

When we got ready to sell in 1966—I guess this was written in about 1964—we wrote this up to send out to all the realtors. I sent out about 100 copies.

This says that the cattle ranch was 22,000 acres.

Twenty-two thousand deeded acres.

That means you owned that?

Yes. But the ranch itself covered 85,000 acres.

The extra acreage, did you lease that from the federal government or where did that come in?

Well, we didn't have to for years, and then in 1935 a man by the name of Mr. [Farrington R.] Carpenter came in, and they set up the Bureau of Land Management. Before that time anyone—you or anyone else—could bring cattle out and just turn a few loose out there...maybe for the summer or something. And then in the fall they'd gather them.

When you came to the ranch, it was at that time 22,000 deeded acres in the Dickinson family?

Well, we bought some, and his folks bought some. It wasn't quite that big at that time, but darn near.

Were they running cattle on this other land?

Oh, yes.

About how many buildings were on the ranch? What was the ranch house like?

Well, we had the ranch house and then a small house for the hired man. And the garage, and the 2 barns, I guess. We had one big, large barn, and then they had the workshop where they'd shoe horses and stuff.

The large barn, what did you use that for.

Hay storage.

You had a house for the hired man?

Yes. A lot of times they'd hire a hired man that was married.

You didn't have on the Red Rock ranch, then, a lot of hired hands?

No. One man.

Why...?

They didn't do any farming.

So you didn't need a lot of hands for the stock work, is that it?

They would ride.... Whenever they needed anyone extra, why, Dick's mother or myself would ride. Then they would brand, turn them out, and in the wintertime sometimes they'd hire one extra man, and in the summertime we had a bunkhouse. And, oh, sometimes we'd have 15, 18 men to put up the hay, wild grass hay.

You didn't sow it? You just let it go and you harvested it?

Yes, and we irrigated it.

How many cattle were being run on the Red Rock at this time—approximately, of course?

I imagine they had about 750...for years.

That was manageable just with the family and one hired man? I'm thinking...because in other areas in this part of Nevada such as Carson Valley, a lot of the ranches down there had half a dozen hired men during the summer months and things.

Well, in the summer, when they put up hay we put on a hay crew.

Where did these men come from?

The hiring hall here in town [Reno].

Was that a city thing, or state, or do you know?

I think it was state.

Like they have now?

Yes. Just like it.

Day laborers. Were they of any special nationality?

No.

Just whoever was there?

Yes.

Did the Red Rock ever put on a lot of Indian help at this time?

We had a few Indians, but they were never dependable.

Do you know which tribe they were?

Well, just the Washoe, and sometimes they'd get the Paiutes, too.

In Carson Valley, they had the Washoe right there. That was their traditional homeland. So, occasionally, you would put on Indian help?

But they were very.... I don't think we ever could say that you <u>really</u> had a dependable Indian man because after they'd accumulate a little money, why, then they'd want to come to Reno and get drunk. I never remember an Indian woman working out there.

That was going to be my next question. In the house, did your mother-in-law ever have anybody to help her?

Yes. When we put on the hay men, why, then they'd bring out kitchen help, too.

Where did she get these women?

Same place.

Do you remember how much these people got paid?

No, but maybe my husband would.

I'll ask him when we talk to him, too; we'll parallel some of this. Was the hired man usually married, or was he often a single man?

Half and half I'd say, yes.

How long did they stay usually?

When my husband was small and when I first went to the ranch, Harvey [Barnes] was still there, and he'd been there 37 years.

That's a while!

Then, I guess, before Harvey, they had a man by the name of Guy Von Staden. He was there 17 years or something, and then he married a girl and went down by Standish.

Was Harvey married?

No, Harvey never married.

Were you surprised at the distance of the ranch from, say, Reno?

No, because Dick had explained to me that we were way out.

So you were pretty prepared for that?

Yes, and I was prepared very much for the fact that if I didn't like his mother, I'd get the heck out of here!

Was that your decision?

That was my decision before I ever came up. But I liked Charlotte Knox and I liked Polly and Uncle Harry quite well, Charlotte's mother and father. I liked her real well, and, of course, I knew that Hattie was her sister.

Now, you had a nickname for Hattie. Is that right?

Yes, we called her Hattie. Her name was Hedvig. After my children arrived, then it was Mama Hattie.

What was her maiden name?

Petersen.

Mr. Dickinson's father's name was...?

His name was Owen. O. C. Dickinson. Owen Chapman Dickinson.

You said that you were prepared so that if you and Mrs. Dickinson didn't get along you would leave.

Yes. Before were ever married, see.

Did you tell your husband-to-be that you were thinking this?

Yes, I just told him that his mother and I had to get along.

That was understandable?

Yes. In my family we'd never had any quarreling or anything. Mother was very even-tempered and got along with all of the neighbors and everyone, and Dad did, too.

Were you nervous about meeting his parents?

Yes. Oh, sure. I didn't know whether they were would accept me, see?

Why might they not?

I don't know. But I just...well, his sister never did.

There were just the 2 children?

One sister, and she was 3 years older—Frances.

Is she still alive?

Yes.

And where does she live now?

What is that name of that... [Plumb Lane].

Is she married?

Her husband is passed away.Her married name is Skipper. This was her second husband. They're both passed away.

Was she still on the ranch when you went there?

No, she was living in Reno and working at the Washoe County Title Guaranty Company. Polly, the one in Los Angeles, she and Judge [Ben] Curler—I don't think he was a judge at that time—but they started the Washoe County Title Guaranty Company here in Reno. It was the only title company in the state of Nevada when they started.

Do you remember when that was?

No, but Dick can tell you. [It was around 1890 and before 1900.] She worked with him several years, and then she married Harry. Then when Dooley, as we call her—Clara is her real name—finished school, she went in there, and one of the brothers—Charlie Knox—also worked in with the title company. And then when times went on—and I couldn't tell you just exactly when because it was before my time—about 1920 or so they started guaranteeing titles. Mike [Cyril Knox] and Dooley and that family didn't have enough money to guarantee them. They had to put up at least $100,000 or something, even back then in 1928 or 1930. So they went out to see Chapman, and he put up the ranch for them to guarantee the titles.

When you talk about guaranteeing titles, do you mean that when someone would come in and they'd do a title search, that they'd guarantee that the search was clear and that was insurance against faulty titles?

That's right.

Did they ever lose on that?

No, and they traveled clear down to Goldfield and all over the state. This Clara Knox, Hattie's sister, had a photographic memory, and Mike had all the records there—her husband, Cyril [Knox]; they'd nicknamed him Mike. He had all the records and everything that could be looked up, but it was much easier to just go say to Dooley, "Who owned that property out in Gardnerville before Dangberqs bought it? Who had that property?"

And she'd say, "Oh, well, that was Settelmeyer. That was Ben Settelmeyer; Ed Settelmeyer had that. Don't you remember, Mike? They had it in about 1905 or...."

What prompted Polly and Judge Curler to....

Judge Curler had the education of an attorney. People were demanding...because

other people.... At that time a lot of the property hadn't been surveyed and so on and so forth. People would just take squatter's rights. Well, if you had proved up on it, there was quite a bit of enmity built up because other people would come in and claim, "Well, that belongs to me." So before this time, there had been no title.

Title companies were relatively a new thing around the country then, so they got in on the ground floor on that?

They were in on the ground floor.

Who was the judge who was in on this? He was an attorney here in town?

Judge Ben Curler, yes. When Polly—-Sophia was her real name—when she finished school out at the ranch and come to Reno, why, her and Dooley both lived with the Curlers. Roomed and board[ed] and went to school. When he started talking [about] this, and she was just about through school, why, they set up the title company.

That title company is still in existence, isn't it?

Yes.

Do you know who owns it now?

No. It has sold a couple of times, I think, since they sold, but they retired on the company. I think that 2 [title companies] more came in that I remember, in about the forties or fifties. Then they just sprouted like....

Yes. When you moved out to the ranch, or at the time you moved up to Reno and then got married, what were the nearest towns to the ranch, besides Reno?

There was Doyle, [California], which was 15 miles away to the north.

How big was Doyle at that time?

Well, Doyle had a service station, a grocery store and a post office. That's all.

About like it does now, almost.

Just about. Oh, it's grown a lot for the population.

The railroad went through there, then, too?

Yes. Western Pacific went through there.

It still does, except Union Pacific owns it now. When did the military base go in out at Herlong? Do you know?

Oh, yes. That was long after my time. In 1940 Herlong went in.

So Reno was actually the closest town?

Oh, yes.

Susanville is on up the road a little ways from Doyle.

Yes, it's 92 miles from Reno, I think, and we were... the ranch house itself was just about 30 miles from Reno. I think we considered Susanville 54 miles up the road.

You made the statement that Frances and you didn't get along very well. Did she not want to ranch; was she not interested in it?

No. She had married at 18 years old, and she went to Chicago to work. She married a boy that was...I never met him—Rockwell was his name, Harry Rockwell. I think he was 19, and she was 18 or something when they married. She went back and worked in one of the big department stores in Chicago. And he was a mechanic for the airport, for the airlines here in Reno. They had a small airport or something that took mail over the summit.

Like to Sacramento?

Yes. And he worked there. He was born and raised in Chicago, and so they went back to Chicago. What was the name of that big store, the biggest, largest store back there? I can't think of....

Spiegel?

No. But, anyway, she had left him before I come here, just shortly before. She had met some girl back there that was very, very wealthy, and she came out to Reno to get a divorce, and then she went back. Frances had introduced her to Dick, and she wanted Dick to marry her—very much so—because they were chumming together.

This was before your time?

Yes, and before Dick went down to L.A. But he was never really interested in her. Frances was always very money minded. They had never deprived her of anything. If they had 10¢, they'd give her 9¢ if she wanted it. So she wanted Dick to marry someone that had money. All of her life she's been that way. Aunt Dooley told me one time...I said, "I just can't understand at all," I said, "why she isn't happier."

And she told me, she said, "Judie, if you could knock on her door, and when she opened the door, tell her, 'Here's a million dollars,' I think maybe she'd be happy. There're some people like that, I guess. We're different as day and night.

Yes. When you first arrived on ranch, then, Frances wasn't there?

No. She never lived there after I came.

When you first came there, what were the conditions on the ranch? Did you have electricity at that time?

No. We didn't have electricity until my son was 10 years old. We had gas after...oh, my, we must have been married 18 years before we had electricity. We got gas light, the bottled gas.

Did you have that delivered, or did you have to come into town to get that?

My husband come into town to get that.

How much would he get at one time?

Oh, 5 or 6 bottles.

How long did that last?

Well, 2 or 3 months.

Do you remember how much that cost?

Ten dollars.

Did you do your heating from bottled gas, too, at that time?

No, we had wood. We bought coal. We had the lights, and then we got a gas refrigerator.

Before that, though, when you weren't even on anything like that and no electricity....

We had the coal oil lamps, kerosene.

How did you...we have modern refrigerators now, but you didn't have refrigerators.

We had what we called a cooler which was a small building or an enclosed area. Then we had a rock house up where Dick and his folks lived. It was built completely of rock, and it was about 15 inches thick.

Did it sit on the ground, or was it dug into a hill?

Oh, it was a good-sized building.

On top of the ground, though? It wasn't like a root cellar dug in?

No. It had 2 windows in it; we would curtain the windows with burlap and wet the curtains, just soak them down, With the breeze going through, even in the summertime, we could keep milk.

It's kind of like a springhouse without the spring, then, because the spring would do the same thing.

Yes, that's what it was. We could keep meat out there, we covered the meat with cheesecloth, as long as we kept those curtains wet.

Then in the wintertime, of course, you didn't have much of a problem.

No.

On the ranch at that time, you talked about having meat. What kind of livestock was being raised besides the cattle?

Well, we had 2 or 3 sheep, just for family use, and a couple of hogs.

Did you save the wool and make use of that?

They sold it.

You didn't use it?

No.

Did you sell that here in Reno?

Yes. They brought it into the hide house.

Where was that? Do you remember the name of that?

Bissinger [& Company].

Do you remember who owned it?

[No.] Dick's uncle [Ross Petersen] worked there.

Where was that in Reno?

It was out east on Fourth Street, not very far out, then; it wasn't as far as Sparks.

Sparks was out of town then!

Yes.

Were the hogs also just for family use?

Yes.

Did you have chickens?

Oh, we had lots of chickens—about 100, I suppose.

Just for your own ranch use?

Yes, and the eggs.

Did you sell the eggs?

No, we used the eggs, and then we would kill the fryers in the spring.

Could you preserve the meat at all?

Oh, we canned it, and then we made corned beef. When they'd kill the hogs, why, we made sausage.

Did you have a smokehouse?

Yes, we had a smoker.

How did you do the smoking? What did you use for the fuel in the smokehouse?

Wood. We'd get some kind of flavoring or something here in town. I couldn't tell you now; it's been so many years. They'd smolder a fire underneath, just enough to make it smoke.

Did you have ice on the ranch?

No. Only on the pond. Before I ever come here, Dick's cousin that was born out there moved up to Verdi; they owned the ranch where Boomtown is now—Martin [Mortensen]— they used to go up to Boca dam and saw the ice for Reno.

Mr. Mortensen did and Mr. Dickinson?

No. Mr. Mortensen and the ones around Reno. They would saw the ice. It'd be 15, 18 inches.... We had much harsher winters, then.

Yes, I've heard that.

Yes. They would saw the ice and pack it in straw, and they used it in Reno practically all summer. As long as they kept the air away from it, it didn't melt.

They had big ice houses to store it?

Yes.

But on the ranch, you didn't have ice except in the wintertime.

Just in the winter.

You had no way to really keep things real cool except for the rock house, as you called it.

Yes.

So when you butchered, you had to can everything or smoke it.

Smoke it or can it or fix it with corned....

Was it your job and your mother-in-law's job to do this?

Well, the men always helped us cut them up. They'd help do the butchering and cut them up, and then we'd clean up. We'd grind the meat and add salt. We'd pack our butter down in salt water to preserve it. We only milked a cow or maybe sometimes 2, and we'd preserve the butter for when we needed... we did all of our cooking with the butter—practically all.

How would you go about canning back then? I can now with a modern Presto pressure cooker and the self-sealing lids and all, but back then had you ever done any canning?

No, I never canned anything. Mother did, and, of course, I watched her.

So you were at least familiar with it.

Yes. But we'd build the wood and coal fire in the kitchen. You know the old wooden coal stoves?

Yes.

And then we'd put them in the oven.

The jars?

Yes, and cooked them. Put the meat right in the jar.

Then the vacuum would be created that way?

Yes. When we took them out, we'd turn them upside down to seal them.

Did you have the old zinc lids with the rubbers?

Yes. I still have a few of them.

So do I! [laughter] I don't use them.

I love them. Then we had the big.. .what we called crocks.

Yes. The big earthen crocks. Did you make sauerkraut at all?

Yes.

But how do you make corned beef?

Well, my daughter was asking me just the other day. We made this solution of vinegar and salt and spices, and we'd pack [the meat] down in the crocks. Then we'd bring this water and spices and salt to a boil, and then we'd pour it over the meat. Then every 3 days we'd change that. We'd drain it off and skim it off and reboil it and add a little more water and pour it back on hot. We did that for about, oh, 5 weeks—once a week. I guess, at first, we did it about every 3 or 4 days for 3 or 4 times. Then it got so that it was once a week and then once every 2 weeks,and before you knew it, it was cooked.

How much corned beef did you make at one time, because you couldn't store it...?

Oh, we'd use a whole half the shoulder or most of the shoulder.

Enough so that you could eat it fairly...?

Oh, yes. We had corned beef, oh, once a week.

How long does corned beef keep? I mean, you kept that in the rock house, also?

Yes, we kept that in the rock house in those big crocks, and, oh, it would keep 3 or 4 months. It'd keep till the other meat was gone.

Then you'd can a little beef, or you'd can the chickens?

Yes. We canned chickens.

And you made sausage and ham and all?

Yes.

Now, the smoked meat would keep for quite a while?

Yes.

Would you hang those?

Well, it would all be used up about the same time, and then we'd butcher again.

So the butchering process was not a seasonal thing, necessarily.

No.

You butchered as the need arose.

Yes.

Did you ever make soap on the ranch?

Yes, I did. [laughter]

Did you rely mostly on homemade soap or store-bought soap?

No, I relied mostly on store-bought soap, but I had problems with eczema, I guess, 2 years. I came in, and Dr. Morrison.... I've forgotten just exactly what I put into it. I used, of course, the fat that we had on the ranch, but I used much less lye. See, we had Naphtha soap we'd use for washing, and it was very strong and hard on the hands, Why we didn't wear rubber gloves I don't know. We had them but we wore them very little. He suggested that I make the soap and make it with less lye.

Did you know how to make soap, or did you have to learn?

No, I had to learn. But Dick's mother had made soap, and the grandmother had made soap.

How did you go about this?

Just put it in large containers and mixed it up and boiled it—you have to cook at.

Did you have to save ashes? I know early on people did that, and you had to do that, too?

Yes, we had to do that, too. Ashes, yes. But it wasn't hard to do—just the mixing.

Did you ever make candles? Did you use candles much on the ranch?

No, we used kerosene mostly. We didn't use candles very much because Grandmother had had a sad experience back in Denmark with children with candles—I mean close relatives. They had burned a couple of homes down. So she didn't believe in candles at all. We would let the kids light a match; we had the lamps that hooked on the wall, and we forbid them to carry them, and they'd just light the lamp on the wall.

When you did baking, did you make your own yeast, or did you buy store-bought yeast?

No, I bought store-bought yeast. I never made yeast.

Did you ever make salt-rising bread?

Yes, but we bought the beginning, the starting.

Really? You didn't make your own from potato or cornmeal?

No, no.

You cheated! [laughter] Did Dick's mother ever make salt-rising bread?

I don't know. But she made wonderful bread, so I made very little bread. She'd make bread for all of us.

Well, that was easy on you.

Yes. I made a lot of biscuits—cakes and things like that, but the bread....

She was the bread person.

Yes.

You say you had about 100 chickens. That's an awful lot of eggs, isn't it?

Yes. I don't remember exactly what we did with all the eggs or what. Of course, we ate so many chickens, but we'd start out with quite a few. Then when Hattie and Chapman would come to town, why, they'd bring 4 or 5 chickens in to Aunt Dooley...and eggs.

So you helped each other out that way?

Yes, we shared with the family, because she worked at the title company, you see. They didn't have any chickens or any garden or any beef.

You didn't think about it back then, either, so much; you just did it.

No, we'd just bring it. We'd get ready to go, and we always packed up a big box of stuff for town.

When you and Mr. Dickinson married, what kind of domestic responsibilities did you have?

I didn't have any special.. .I just worked with his mother. We'd fix meals together, clean house together, wash together....

You made a pretty comfortable partnership?

Yes. We were just like sisters.

Just picked up, and each of you supported the other?

Yes. She had never learned to drive. I had the Ford, of course, and then I taught her to drive.

So it was a trade-off, and she taught you a lot of necessary things?

Yes.

Was being a ranch wife much different from what...I mean, did you have to learn a lot of things About the domestic responsibilities?

I suppose slowly, but I didn't make a big issue of it because we just took it as we.... She'd say, "Well, now, tomorrow we better can that so-and-so," or something, or, "Maybe we better get that meat ready to smoke."

Well, you'd been raised on a farm, anyway.

Sometimes.., if it was a meat or something that had to be ground up or something, why, then maybe the men wouldn't ride. They'd go out and feed the horses and stuff in the morning, and then they'd come back in and grind the meat for us.

Did you have one of those big grinders like the little household ones, only bigger?

Yes.

So you didn't have any set responsibilities that were yours that you had to do?

No, no.

Did you have any interaction with the hired man and his family at all?

No. Whenever we had a hired man that had a wife, why, he would eat up at his own place. We'd furnish them with the meat and the garden. And he'd help with the garden, too. But most of the time we tried to get a man that was single.

Why would that be?

Well, it worked out better.

I would think that....

Another woman...and we didn't want to take her socially with us too much.

There was a social strata there...?

Yes, a little bit. Well, maybe she'd fit in, and maybe she wouldn't. We had several after Hattie got older. We had a hired man with a wife, and then Hattie would have her do housework just....

To help out?

Yes.

Wouldn't a single man be more apt to move on?

Well, Harvey stayed 37 years. Then when they'd come to town, why, he'd come to town, too, and maybe he'd stay a week, and then when they'd come back out next week if they weren't real busy.. .when they were real busy, they'd need him.

So it was kind of in the quality of the man you got, too?

Yes. They were ranch hands, you know?

Yes. But a woman could add problems?

Yes. Either she wasn't happy, she got lonesome, or there wasn't anything to do,or he was gone all day, and she....

Yes. I can understand that, if it wouldn't have been the right woman.

But after my children started to grow up and went to school, then we had to get a hired man with a child to keep the school going. We had the smallest county-maintained school in the United States for 3 years. Then Nevada passed laws that you had to have 5 children to start and 3 children to maintain a school. They had the school district because Dick's mother and sisters went to school out there. So then we got this hired man with...I think he had 4 children or something. Well, the first year Krestine went over, we hired a teacher, and she taught Long Valley School over by Hallelujah on [Highway] 395; that was her first year in school.

Was the school right there about where the roads...?

Yes, where the roads cross. Right over there, [highways] 395 and 70.

It's not there any more at all, is it?

No, no. Well, it was about a mile or a mile and a half.

Toward Loyalton?

Yes, west. I don't know where the other kids came from. There were a couple from Doyle, and then there were 2 or 3 from over in there that went to Long Valley School. Krestine went there one year,and then that fall the school fell apart. The people moved or some darn thing. So I got in touch with the teacher and hired her for Red Rock. She came and lived with us and taught at Red Rock.

She lived in the house with you, and did she have room and board from you?

Yes.

Did she get a wage, also?

Yes, oh, yes. The county paid her... or the state... I don't know.. .about $90 a month, I think. Then we moved a building from Constantia, California, which is down toward Doyle. We moved a building from there that they had had for...what did they call those? They brought a bunch of boys out there.

CCC camps?

Yes, CCC camp. We bought a building—they had left some buildings down there. So we went down to the Constantia ranch and got this building. Dick knew the—it wasn't Bevilacqua; it was somebody else—that moved the building up for us. They moved the building up, and we put the school down there because we wanted it out of the meadow so that the children over the hill would go.

How far away was the building, then, from the ranch house, itself?

One mile. The kids would go down there to school, and the teacher would go down there, also. And for years they had an old cart, horse drawn, that they'd take down to school and come back.

Could you have sent your kids into Reno or into Doyle to go to school?

Yes.

You didn't want to do that, though?

No.

Did you have any trouble keeping teachers?

No. I'd hire them for one year, and then if they'd want to come back, we'd have them another year. I think the first teacher we had for 2 years...I guess a couple of years, most all of them. I think every one of them stayed a couple of years.

Do you remember any of their names?

Well, there was Mae Amy and Elizabeth Beck. Mrs. Cloak was the last one. And did I tell you Marlie Randrup?

Did most of these young gals get their degrees out of the university at Reno? Do you know?

One of them was a friend of a friend, and they came from the state of Washington—2 of them. Marlie Randrup came from Susanville, and Bernice [Craig]. Mae Amy came from the state of Washington.

Through the influence of connections with you?

Just friends of friends, and knew that we had this school. They didn't want too

many kids to start out with. They were just graduates, you see.

Yes, I can understand that. How did they take to Nevada and being on a ranch?

Oh, they were fascinated with it.

So you made good choices that way.

And old Mrs. Cloak, she taught up at Dayton, Nevada; she walked from Dayton to Carson City, oh, I don't know, for 3 or 4 months, before she got her degree, to go to school.

She was determined.

Oh, she was very determined.

Good teacher?

Yes, very good. She really prepared the kids.Our kids got good grades in high school.

What's your philosophy about one-room schools?

Well, I think it all depends on your teacher. I really do.

You feel that your children got a good, strong education?

Well, we had so few children.

That's true. You could get really specialized training.

But I went to one-room schools, too, and I had a good foundation; I felt I did. But, of course, we didn't go in for the social studies a great deal. We taught them reading, writing and arithmetic, and then geography and all of that and history. But, I mean, the main education was not, oh, social, like they do now.

I'm going to jump ahead just for a question so that we don't forget it later, but your children had to move on to high school, then, after the eighth grade on the ranch. Did they go into Reno for that?

They came to Reno. We roomed and boarded them in here, and then they came home weekends.

Were they well prepared for high school?

Very. Krestine finished the eighth grade out there at the ranch, and it was time to come to high school, and she came in and lived one year. She was very unhappy not living at home; she liked to live at the ranch again. So we let her stay out—come out there another year—and she came to Reno with the mailman on Sunday night. He'd pick her up down there at the Red Rock Road and bring her in with him,and then she stayed with Mrs. Tuttle during the week—Dr. [J. Park] and Mrs. [Charlotte] Tuttle—and then she'd come home. I'd come in on Friday and Larry would have a music lesson, and then she'd come home for the weekend.

Now, are the Tuttles related?

Yes. Mrs. Tuttle was Dick's cousin. She was a Knox girl before she married Dr. Tuttle.

But that very first year, Krestine didn't come home on weekends?

No. She stayed with them.

She would come home for major vacations and things like that?

Yes.

Let's go back to your responsibilities on the ranch. Did you have a garden on the ranch?

Yes, we had a large garden. They had fruit trees for years and years, I guess, before my going to the ranch, and in that same area, we had the garden.

What did you raise in your garden?

Well, we had everything that grew in this part of the country. We had carrots and beets and corn, rutabagas and so on. They usually started so that we could use the garden approximately around the Fourth of July.

When you say "use the garden," do you mean harvest the vegetables from it?

Yes. Carrots would be quite small, but very tender, and we had spinach and by about, oh, probably the first of August we had the corn. We planted it in sections so that we had corn from then until frost. Fresh corn was coming on every 2 or 3 weeks.

That was sweet corn?

Yes. We never planted the other corn. We had a lot of corn; we canned corn, and dried corn.

How did you dry the corn?

Well, we just put it out in the sun. We cut it off the cob, and then we put it in boiling water. We blanched it 3 minutes, I think, in boiling water. We'd have the water boiling when we put it in, and we'd <u>keep</u> it boiling; we didn't put in enough corn at one time to stop it...really stop it boiling.

Why did you blanch it? Do you know the purpose behind that?

Well, it'd dry better. If you just took it off the cob and dried it, it was tough.

Then once you had it blanched, how did you treat it to dry it?

Then we'd cut it off the cob and put it out on sheets. We had a big sheet, like a blanket, and laid it out in the sun.

How did you keep insects and things off?

We'd put cheesecloth over it.

There isn't a <u>real</u> problem with that here like there is, say, back in my country in the Midwest.

No.

Did you dry many other vegetables or fruits?

We dried peas. But peas never did too well here. Of course, I came from the state of Washington, where they have plenty of moisture and <u>beautiful</u> peas. My father was 6 foot one or two, and he would raise his arms, and his peas were up to... a good 8 feet high.

Oh! Did they plant peas on the Red Rock ranch before you came?

Yes, a few, just for late in the season.

That wasn't anything you brought with you because you wanted it?

No.

Did you bring anything from Washington?

Yes, I brought the Chinese peas that you eat pods and all.

Like the sugar peas.

Yes. They did just as well as any, and they had never had them.

Was there any resistance on the part of the family to trying these new things?

No, because they were very anxious to try new things. I think all the ranchers were because we'd take them here and there, and everyone was pleased.

Sure, if something grew well, it supplemented the diet. Did you plant leafy vegetables like lettuce and things?

Oh, yes. Lettuce and spinach and cabbage. Cauliflower—they didn't do too well.

They still don't around here from what I hear.

Then what we couldn't use fresh, why, we canned— anything that wouldn't keep. But the beets and carrots and rutabagas and things we left in the ground till spring, and after the first frost in the fall, why, we'd bring in all the hubbard squash and banana squash and that, and we packed them down in straw.

Now, did you store those in the rock house?

No, we put those in the barn, in straw.

You mentioned you had fruit trees.

Yes, mostly apples, and some winter pears.

How large was your garden?

I suppose an acre.

Whose responsibility was the garden?

Well Dick's mother and I, after it was in. The hired man and my husband would help plant it. They plowed it and fertilized it and made the rows, and then we'd go out and help them plant it. Then we changed the water—we irrigated more or less.

When you plowed, was this done with a horse and a hand plow?

Yes.

What did they use for fertilizer?

Well, they just used the manure spreader.

How did you irrigate?

Well, we made little ditches.

And then the water would run down between them?

Yes.

Where did the water come from to irrigate this?

The spring. We had a spring out there not very far from the house.

Was that channeled into the garden,., or did you have to hand carry?

No, we channeled it. We had enough stream that we'd irrigate 5, 6 rows at a time or something. Then it would run there maybe 2, 3 days, and we'd turn it off.

To get the water from the spring to the garden, how did you get it transported?

Oh, it'd come down in a ditch.

Now, you told me that you had hogs and chickens. Did you use any of the garden refuse to feed the hogs and chickens?

Yes, all of it.

Did you feed them anything else?

We bought corn and wheat and grain for the chickens. We called it scratch; it was a mixed.... And our chickens were never left in the pen. They would always run outside, and so they'd get plenty of gravel.

Did you ever slop your hogs?

Yes. In the wintertime.

What did you fix that from? Can you give me the recipe?

Well, I don't know exactly. We always added some oil cake from down below because my husband would go down and get oil cake from central California for the cattle, to supplement their feed in the winter. We'd add the oil cake and then grains and whatever we had for the hogs, too. But we'd add boiling hot water and let it stand approximately half an hour; then we'd feed it to the hogs.

When you had the summer help on and all the hay hands, about how many men would that be?

Oh, sometimes we had 16, 18.

OK. And did they live on the ranch during the hay season?

Yes. They brought their own bedrolls.

You had to feed them?

Yes.

Was that your responsibility with your mother-in-law's?

Well, they always hired a person to do the main part of the cooking, and then we helped her serve it—and the final touches. Dick's mother did most of that the year when I first went to the ranch. Then I...of course, I just followed in.

Did you do all that cooking in the main ranch house?

Yes.

Some of the ranches, like down in Carson Valley, specifically....

Yes, we never had a room or a building.

Did you have a baking oven, by any chance, <u>outside</u> of the main kitchen?

No.

In Carson Valley a lot of the ranchers had big, huge baking ovens.

I think that come from the Indians because a lot of our friends had it—Settelmeyers.... We would go out to Carson Valley and visit the Settelmeyers and the Neddenrieps and the Dresslers.

So you would help the cook. What was an average meal like on the ranch?

Basic—meat and potatoes and 2 vegetables and then a dessert.

That was the standard noontime or...?

Well, we had breakfast in the morning about 6:00, and then they'd go out and work. Then about 10:00, why, we'd take them coffee and a cookie or 2. We took that out in the field about 10:00 because that came from the Danish. I don't know if everybody did that or not. But Grandma Petersen came from Denmark, you see, and they always gave them a snack in the middle of the morning. So we'd take that out, and they'd stop, oh, maybe 20 minutes or something. Then they'd come back up to the ranch house for dinner at noon and unhitch the horses and let them feed and water. Then in the middle of the afternoon, why, we usually took them out a cake or whatever we had. They'd usually work till 6:30, 7:00 at night, and then we'd feed them supper.

Did you ever work in the fields?

No.

Was there any restriction against your working if you had wanted to?

Well, I was busy helping Hattie.

Did you ever <u>want</u> to do field work?

No.

What about working with the livestock at all, like the horses. Did you have any responsibilities with that?

No, none whatever.

Could you have if you'd wanted to?

I suppose, but I never.... The men did it; we didn't do it.

On some ranches the women were just not allowed to.

No, there was never any not allowing, but we just didn't do it.

Was the ranch able to furnish all of the commodities you needed to exist—all of the food and all of the supplies?

No, we bought quite a bit. We bought our potatoes, you see, and we bought rice, and we bought cereal and sugar and...the basic big stuff.

Where did you buy those?

Reno.

How often would you buy them?

Well, whenever we come to town.

How often was that?

Sometimes if there was someone coming in to the dentist or something, it might be 2 weeks, and it might be 6 weeks.

So it all depended. Say, it had been 6 weeks and now someone has to come in to go to the doctor....

Then we'd get whatever.

How did you go about doing laundry?

[We had a] hand washing machine, as we called it. It was a tub with slats.
Lawrence Dickinson: It had boards across—about inch square slats across the bottom. Then there were slats in the bottom of the washing machine.

And one thing, I never washed on a washboard.

Did you have a wringer?

We had a wringer, yes.

How did you heat your wash water; did you heat it outside?

I think we would heat it on the stove in the house and then carry it out because we'd wash right off the kitchen, right outside the kitchen.

Did you do any bleaching or anything? How did you handle that, or didn't you worry about it?

Well, we'd put it out in the sun. Salt water, and hang it out in the sun. Sometimes soda—soda or salt. They had some kind of a bleach, too.

Susanville and Doyle were within range. Did you ever go there for shopping for anything?

Yes, as time went on. At first, for several years, we didn't go down there much. But we would socialize in Doyle. We've had ranch friends that lived right close to Doyle. So while we were down that way, we would buy this or that or something else that we needed. During the war and when they rationed sugar and coffee and things like that, we always went to Doyle because they knew us and we knew them. Just transients that went through, they'd tell them they didn't have any coffee, but they'd save it for the regular customers.

Now, when you came to Reno and moved out to the ranch, that was during the Depression.

Yes! [laughter] I came in a nurse and bought shingles for the house!

Did the Depression affect the operation of the ranch very much at all? Did you notice things out there?

No, no. The ranch made enough money that we were able to get what we needed.

You didn't notice much of a change, then, or you just were able to make do and no problem like some people had?

We didn't have any problem with that part. But we were married in the deep Depression when the bank closed. All of them closed in 1931.

Did the Depression affect the financial operation of the ranch very much?

Oh, sure. We didn't buy any machinery, or we didn't buy any this or that that we could get along without.

What kind of a relationship did you have with your banker at that time? Was there any problem of ever losing a mortgage or anything like this, possibly?

No, we never mortgaged the ranch.

Never mortgaged at all?

No.

You were able to keep it out of that OK?

Well, we just didn't buy. We just bought what we needed. If we had a little extra money, I'd buy something that I felt I needed, and if we didn't have it, I didn't buy it.

You went without until you could get it.

Yes.

Did you do any bartering then? Did you have enough cash...like, when you came to Reno or went to Doyle and you needed coffee or sugar or whatever it was, did you ever barter for it?

No. We'd watch for sales and things. Oh, I suppose on big machinery—a rake or any machinery—they'd barter on it, sure.

And when the bank closed, there wasn't any money, don't you remember?

Yes, I remember.

Couldn't even pay you for nursing.

I came in here and took care of Durham that had Durham Chevrolet. I nursed for him for a week, and he told me that he would give me twice the amount of money—$12 a shift instead of $6—if I would wait for it, that he had money in the bank, and if I would wait for my money.... But we needed the money, so I told him I wouldn't do that.He'd had surgery or something; I've forgotten now. But, as I say, sure, we tried to get a good price on things that we would buy—machinery and things—but you never bartered for food or sugar or anything.

Did you buy your clothing in town, also?

Well, I made most of my clothes.

You'd buy the material in town?

Yes. And, of course, Dick's grandmother taught me to knit and tat, and we made our clothes.

Did you do any home dyeing of materials?

Oh, yes. That's the part I hated most of all!

Really? Why?

Oh, it was so time-consuming, and you never knew exactly how it was going to turn out.

How would you go about this?

Well, we bought the dye. Whatever it was you were going to dye, you'd wash it and have it completely saturated. Then you'd have the dye in another container, and you'd put whatever material you had in there, and you'd keep lifting it up and keep stirring it and lift it up frequently so that it would dye evenly, if possible. But many times it didn't dye evenly. No, and that I hated that!

What kinds of things would you dye?

Oh, we'd dye skirts, especially, and tablecloths and curtains and blouses.

What kind of material was it?

Most of it was cotton. I don't even remember rayon in those days, and wool you couldn't boil, so you couldn't dye wool.

Yes. It came whatever it was—natural colors.

We'd bring it to town once in a while and have a big piece dyed. You always had it dyed before you made it up.

Because it would shrink?

Well, yes, and then it would take the dye easier, too...a big sheet.

You've said you knew pretty much what to expect from ranch life. In the first several years you were at the Red Rock, did you get any great surprises—was there anything that came along that wasn't quite as you had expected it to be? Or was it pretty much what you thought it would be like?

Gee, I don't know; let me think a minute. [With Dick's mother's and my] being so close, I think, we just kind of melded everything together.

So it was just a pretty easy transition for you?

Yes. We'd go down to the people on the [Gene] Rolland ranch and [visit] around together and down to Doyle and visit and clear down to Milford, [California]—.his mother and I would. We visited around and shared ideas with everyone else.

Why would you go visiting—your mother-in-law and you?

Oh, just socially. We enjoyed the women, and sometimes the men would be riding all day. We'd give them a lunch to take with them, then we'd get in the car and go down to visit Harwoods or Rollands or.... Then quite often on Sundays, why, the men would go down, too, and they'd visit with the men. Then they also exchanged branding. When they were branding down there by Milford, why, my husband and his father would go down and help them brand, and we'd spend the day in the house.

So there was sharing of labor between the ranches, then?

Yes, very much. Not feeding...periodic chores and roundup—we'd ride together.

Did you ever help on roundups, riding?

Oh, yes, a lot.

Did you enjoy that?

Yes, very much. Dick's mother did that when I went there. So then I just joined in, too.

On a lot of ranches women were not supposed to do those things.

Dick's mother was a beautiful horsewoman. In her early days she rode sidesaddle, and she'd go up over the brush, galloping.

I've been told once you get on a sidesaddle, it's hard to get off of them, so you're kind of locked in!

You can get off.... [laughter]

Was there another car on the ranch?

Yes, they always had a car after I went there.

Did all the ranchers around have cars?

Yes. Everybody had a car, that I know of.

If you hadn't had a car, would you have been able to socialize so much?

No.

The car really helped you be able to get around and move around and see other people, which really opened up a lot of experiences and social situations?

Oh, yes.

Back where I'm from, on the dairy farms in Wisconsin, many of the women earned their own spending money by what they called "egg money." They would raise the chickens and use what they could of the chickens and the eggs on the farm.

And sell them.

Yes. But at killing time they would kill the chickens and sell them. They would also sell the eggs regularly.

Well, later on we did somewhat, but not a great deal. But I would raise fryers and bring them into the girls that worked at the title company. I'd sell them 10 fryers or something—each family—or some family would take 2 or 3 or something. The hired man usually helped me, and we'd kill them and clean them, just like you'd buy a fryer today.

You used to do them wholesale.

Yes.

What did you do for spending money, or didn't you have much need for spending money?

I asked my husband for spending money.

And was he pretty generous?

Yes. What was his was mine; what's mine, my own! [laughter]

I like that philosophy!

But I was never a spendthrift.

Which maybe is one reason he gave you have what you wanted!

I know I had a very dear friend later in years that they run a ranch down by Red Bluff. She never knew what he sold his cattle for or what he got for them; he never told her one speck of the business. He would give her $20, and that was it. Dick and I were never that way. I knew if we had $50 or if we had $20 or if we didn't have anything.

Who kept the books on the ranch?

Dick. I've never taken care of the money at all. don't know hardly how to make out a check! Oh, I know now how to make out a check, but I don't know how to keep track of them!

Well, where I'm from most of the farm wives keep the books.

No, I never kept the books at all. I think he and his father did them first for a while, and then he just took over. He did the books for his dad, too, for years.

Would you say that you were always an active partner in deciding what went on with the ranch financially?

Oh, yes. We discussed everything.

So you never felt left out, or that you didn't know what was happening, if for some reason you had to know?

No, no.

You mentioned that you went around to other ranches, you and your mother-in-law, and that the men would get together, too. There was a lot of that, I take it?

Yes. And whenever anyone from—I wouldn't say anyone from Susanville, but the acquaintances that we knew in Susanville, south—whenever they come to Reno, they'd always stop for a meal.It was either coming or going, they'd have a meal with us.

Were you on a main road?

Yes, we were on the Red Rock Road, main road to Reno.

So [Highway] 395 didn't even exist then?

Well, they put 395 in, I think, in 1930, just before I went to the ranch, because it wasn't finished. Yes, they were working on it. But before that, Red Rock Road was the main road from Susanville to Reno, that area.

It was just a dirt road?

Just a dirt road.

It still is, for the most part, isn't it?

Well, Red Rock is.

Yes, 395 isn't. So that was a standard thing to do, then—when people would come through and they knew you, they'd stop?

Oh, yes, We visited an hour or 2. You were never without food because you had canned food. I could get a meal in an hour anytime. Nobody ever came to the ranch that they didn't eat.

She saw to it, right? Did other ranchers return the favor, then?

Oh, yes. And whenever we would go for a visit, we'd go for a day. We stayed out all day. We didn't have to let them know. We had no telephones. We'd just drop in, and if they were home, fine; if they weren't, we'd go to the neighbors'. [laughter]

What if, say, somebody dropped in, and you were busy butchering? Would they pitch in and help, or was it OK just to sit there and talk?

Well, I don't remember anyone dropping in when we were butchering.

Well, let's say something else.. .you and your mother-in-law were busy dyeing some materials or something.

Well, then we'd just finish dyeing it. They'd stand and watch us do whatever we were doing. Maybe we wouldn't go into detail with it like we would if they weren't there. But we'd get through as quickly as we could so we could sit down and visit. And, as I say, I never had any trouble feeding them because I always had plenty there to eat.

What kinds of occasions would you get together for, if something was planned? Now, this dropping in is impromptu.

Oh, a birthday, or Sundays we got together, and we'd go fishing together up in Last Chance—things like that.

Where's Last Chance?

Up above Doyle, west of Doyle up in the Sierra Nevada. 75

Is that a reservoir or a lake?

No, just a stream. Small trout. We planted fish in the reservoir, and a lot of the people would come down and fish for a day.

That was on the ranch you had a reservoir?

Yes, that was on the ranch, right close to the house.

I've seen pictures of that, yes. Was the reservoir there when you moved down to the ranch?

Oh, yes. Dick's father put.. .I don't know what year they put that in. When Dick was just a small boy, they had Mr. Kietzke—named the same as Kietzke Lane—and he came out; he was a miner. He came out and dug into Petersen Mountain—way in; there was about 5 springs along the mountain there quite a little ways apart. He dug in...I think it was 680 feet, but as he went in, he would shale it up. He laid pipe and shaled it up and covered it good so it wouldn't freeze. That's the water they used for the reservoir. It runs winter and summer, very much the same, and a cold water.

Did you get your domestic water from that reservoir, too?

No, we got it from a different spring. But after they put in the tunnel, as we called it, there were about 5 springs dried up. It all went into that one. He went in until he hit boulders or a big rock that he couldn't dig any more and then closed it up; he had a pretty good stream of water going. Then they run it in a ditch down to the reservoir.

What was the reservoir water used for?

Irrigating the ranch.

The garden and that?

No. The garden was done with the stream to the house. The spring was south of the ranch.

That you used the garden water for?

Yes, and for the house, too.

How did you get the water to the house?

They piped it down.

Did they have a pump or a well or anything at the house?

No, it was a spring. Dick's aunt.. .years later when the kids were growing up and all, why, Dick's aunt [Claire Dickinson Knox] came out there, and she was getting elderly then. In the wintertime we always left a little stream running in the bathroom so it wouldn't freeze up—keep the pipe open. She came out, and I said, "Now, don't turn the water off. Be sure and don't turn the water off."

So she went into the bathroom, and she walked from the bathroom to the kitchen, and she said, "I don't know who left that water running in the tub!"She understood it had to be running in the toilet, but she didn't understand about the tub, and she says, "Somebody left that water running in the tub, and I know you don't have that much water."And she turned it off. I run from the

kitchen to the bathroom, and it was already frozen. We were without water for 6 weeks.

How cold was it then?

Oh, down to zero—11 below.

How did you get your domestic water?

From the spring. Well, I...with melted snow and stuff until the Harwoods came down. He had some kind of a welder or something, and he put the heat on.... Dick uncovered the pipe sections, hoping that we'd get more here and more there, and we burned every stick of wood we had and everything else trying to open it, and we couldn't open it. Then [Claude] Harwood came down and opened it for us. Oh, that was a real problem.

Thank goodness you weren't milking and had that happen or something.

I'll tell you, that was one of the hardest times we ever went through, I think.

Do you remember when that was?

I don't know.

You mentioned firewood. Where did you get your firewood from?

They hauled it from Reno. It'd come in a big truck. For years we had mostly coal, see. But they'd bring some wood, too, for the fireplace and stuff.

You didn't have any trees on the ranch that were capable of that?

No, no.

You'd mentioned that you socialized with ranchers in Carson Valley. Do you know how the relationships with those ranchers began?

Yes. Buying bulls. My husband and his father would go around to Carson and Susanville and Red Bluff. We went down to the Red Bluff bull sale; long as I can remember we'd go down there once a year. That was years before Johnny Ascuaga had the bull sale here in Reno. Oh, a few times, but not many, we'd go out by Fallon or Winnemucca, and he'd go out looking, and after he decided who had them and how much they wanted for them—compare prices—why, then he'd buy bulls. Then we'd get acquainted with the women. While they were looking for bulls—maybe they'd have them out on pasture or something—well, my mother-in-law and I would sit and visit with the ranch ladies. That's how we got acquainted with them. Neddenrieps, and Fred Dressler, and oh, I don't recall just how many down that way. Oh, and Berrums. Henry Berrum had a large ranch down by Carson.

You knew Lena Neddenriep, then?

Yes.

I know her.

Oh, do you?

Yes. You must know Fred and Anna Dressler?

Yes. She's a darling.

Yes, she is. When you got together, did you women compare and share ways of doing things?

Yes. Recipes, fancy work.

Did you notice any way that they did things terribly differently down there in Carson Valley?

They did a lot of weaving and a lot of lace making with the shuttles. There never was anyone up from Carson.... I wanted to learn that lace making, especially, from the shuttles, and there was never anyone that could show me.

Why do you think they did it?

I don't know.

Could it have been their German heritage?

It could have come from Germany, yes. That's the only thing I know. But they did a lot of weaving. Mrs. Neddenriep and....

Big loom weaving?

Yes. Big loom weaving.

You also said about the backyard ovens that were in use down there, and you thought they might have come from the Indians.

Yes. I still do; I don't know. The last I heard of them using them, they used them for smoking meat and turkeys and things like that. I haven't really talked to anyone for a long time. Now, Fred Dressler's daughter, Luetta Bergavin, might still do some of that; I don't know. She, the daughter, is also a registered nurse, so we had something in common. She went to Portland and took her nursing.

Fred Dressler. Tell me a little bit about Fred.

Well, we all loved Fred. He's a good mixer, and a level-headed businessman. Then in later years, my husband was on ASC [Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation] committee with him, and the Grazing Board. After 1935. The Grazing Board went in in about 1935. [Farrington R.] Carpenter came out from Washington and sold all the ranchers on the idea of the Grazing Board, because there were so many people that would come out and turn out their cattle whenever there was feed. And, of course, there were several dry years—l938 was a very dry year. There wasn't feed for our cattle and their cattle and the game, too. There was a lot of game then. In about, oh, I've really forgotten...I'd say about 1948, they came out and counted 10,000 deer on the Red Rock ranch. The White Hats came out from Reno.

Who are the White Hats?

That was a riding group from Reno. The White Hats and the sheriff's office—they all accumulated out there, and then they would ride different districts, 10 men here and 5 men there and so on. [The deer] summered up in the mountains, and they wintered down by Pyramid Lake.

What was the purpose of that count?

Well, to just see how overgrazed we were—if it was cattle that was doing the overgrazing or if it was the deer that were overgrazing. They wanted to bring them both under control.

Did you have fences on the range at that time, or did you, on the Red Rock, just turn the cattle out?

No, we turned the cattle out, but we had certain areas. You turned them out to one spring or another. A cow will travel approximately 5 miles to water, but if she

has to travel more than that, why, she'll stay around the water, and that area would be overgrazed.

So what was happening was, especially in the dry years, the deer and the cattle were competing for the grazing.

That's right. And the water.

Was the Grazing Board a government program?

Yes. The Grazing Board was a government program.

Were the ranchers real concerned about...I mean, they would be for their cattle...but were they also concerned for the deer populations?

Yes. You see, before that they didn't average the bucks with the doe.You could only go out and kill the bucks. Well, maybe there would be one buck for a hundred doe or more. They wanted them averaged, brought into control the same as we control the cattle. So they came out to count them and see how many bucks and so on and so forth there were.

Did this Grazing Board have any relationship to the Taylor Grazing Act, the federal act?

Yes. Nineteen thirty-five it went into effect.

The Taylor Grazing Act?

Yes.

Was the Grazing Board part of this?

Accumulated from that, yes. That brought on the Grazing Board.

I asked about fencing a little while ago, and you said you turned the cattle out. Do you remember when, or if, the Red Rock fenced at all to maintain control of the cattle?

No, we never fenced at all, ever, to control the cattle. We did control them to a certain extent; we'd run the fence up what we called a draw, up a ridge in the mountain. A few cattle would always go around the fence—but not nearly all of them—and they'd graze that area. That's another way that we controlled with the bulls. We would run a bull probably 3 or 4 years, because he wouldn't travel nearly as far from the water as the others did. We turned the heifers to the north of the ranch; well, then we would put a bull that we had used on the south end of the ranch the year before. We had what we called drift fences. They would drift that way. But it was never enclosed. No.

Did you have fencing around the extreme outer borders of the ranch?

No.

The fact that the cattle just would never go far from water, you didn't worry about them that way?

We had fences. After the Grazing Board went in, we had a fence on Fred's Mountain, between us and the Winnemucca ranch, where the [John] Matleys run. Then we had a fence along [Highway] 395, north and south, to keep our cattle from going over into Long Valley. But all the ranchers worked with each other. We would ride with the [Charles, Fred and Leo] Galeppis when they were gathering their cattle, and then what ones had strayed onto them we'd bring those home, and the same thing with the Winnemucca ranch, and the same with Saralequis.

Where were your markets for the cattle, when you sold your beef?

We sold our beef to Swift & Company, most of the time.

Where were they located?

They were located in California, down below Sacramento. We shipped our cattle down to Pittsburg, California— McDougal feedlot, a large feedlot. He had thousands and thousands of cattle feeding. They fed them; we paid so much a pound. They fed them all they would eat.

How did you ship your cattle?

Well, at first, we had to bring them to Sparks. We had to drive them through; it took us 2 days. We had a corral out north of Stead Air Force Base. We called it the wire corral, and we'd drive them out that far and put them in the corral and feed them hay. Then the next morning before daylight, we'd be out there and start them in across the flat. Sometimes it was very, very cold.

How many head would you run at a time, when you drove them into Sparks?

When we drove them into Sparks, oh, about 300.

How many people would it take to do this?

Well, there was Dick's father and his mother, and myself, Dick and the hired man. Five of us.

A few years later, when we would drive them in, why, one time we were out there riding and my father-in-law heard somebody shout, "But you better be careful! There's a man on the horse!" We saw the lights from a car. You see, they were rustling cattle out there on the flat, what we called the flat, where Stead Air Force Base is now. Well, they would rustle cattle, and they would just drive down the road, and when they would shine the bright lights in the cow's eyes, they'd just stand fixed. Then they'd kill the cow, and we'd have no trace of it. Once in a while, we'd come across a hide or the leavings of where they had butchered a cow. But that started really after they started having deep freezes, and they could put them in the deep freeze. Before that, we didn't lose too many cattle.

When would that have been...deep freezes?

Well, 1945 to 1947. We rented a deep freeze in town long before we had a private deep freeze. We'd come into the dairy and rent a deep freeze, and then as we used the beef and all, or if we butchered them, we'd bring in a lot.

Was rustling a big problem?

It got to be a terrible problem. Terrible.

Who would be doing the rustling?

Anyone that needed meat. Sometimes we'd come across a cow where they couldn't keep it, and they'd just take the hind quarters. Maybe some of them were in a hurry. But usually it would be 2, 3 men would get together and come out and kill the cow, load it up, and they'd be gone in 15 minutes.

So you'd never have any track of it. Was there any large-scale rustling? Like in the movies, you always see semis backed up and emptying out an area. Did you experience any of that?

Yes, we did. When you talk to my husband, he has a newspaper article on it where he came out there and the truck was trying to get away and come to Reno.They had 11 head in the truck, and they had loaded up at this windmill chute [cattle chute located at a well site]; the cattle had come in for water. They'd loaded up in the night, and they started for Reno. They took a turn too fast and tipped the truck over. My husband was...I believe he was going to a grazing meeting; I'm not positive. But, anyway, he come along across the truck, and he saw where all the cattle had got up and run off. So he came right into town and notified the sheriff's, and they went out and impounded the truck before the men ever got back there.

What would happen to the rustlers if they got caught?

They did darn little to them! That was the big problem. And you had to prove it! Pat McCarran defended the rustlers—or a rustler family that we had proof on out there before he was state senator—when he was just an attorney in here. He brought the wife in who had a small child and was pregnant again, and she sat in the front seat and cried the entire time of the trial, because she claimed she was hungry and her husband was rustling cattle because she was hungry. And he defended them. We love Pat McCarran, but just the same, he did that. [laughter] Because he, oh, what word would.. .he'd sympathize with them. And you had to have dead proof, absolutely. You couldn't say, "Well I thought..." anything.

Did branding help identify the cattle at all?

Oh, yes.

When did the Red Rock start branding? Was it long before you got there?

I don't know; we'll have to ask Mr. Dickinson. They were branding when I went there in 1931. 86

Did they have a special brand?

Oh, yes. We had the Reverse T Heart.

Describe that, please.

Well, we can draw a heart. It's a heart [drawing), the T is reversed from the bottom of the heart—. In the early days, my husband's father branded with a 45, just the number 45. But it blurred quite badly. His registered horses he branded with a J. You can only brand a horse with a very small iron.

Why is that?

They're too nervous. It affects their nerves. Horses are much higher strung than cattle. Then, 1921, I guess, Dick's father sold out to some sheepmen. Leon Etchapar and Alfonso Aldabbey. They run sheep out there for a couple of years. But they had borrowed a lot of money, [they] paid on the ranch all right, but [they] borrowed money to buy these sheep. The price of mutton and sheep went down, drastically. He couldn't pay off his loan on the sheep, and the banks in Reno closed on him. So then, Mr. Dickinson, my husband's father, took the ranch back. I think Leon Etchapar had it, I believe, 3 years. When he [Mr. Dickinson] took the ranch back, then he started branding with the Reverse T Heart.

Did that have any significance?

Yes, we paid for the brand, and it was very clear and plain. You could see it for several yards away.

Did the heart mean anything, or the T stand for anything?

No, I don't know where they came up with the idea of the brand. Now my husband might be able to tell you. I don't know.

When you shipped or drove your cattle into Sparks, why Sparks?

The railroad center.

Did they have a big feedlot there?

Yes, and holding pens.

Where was that?

Right where MGM is now. Were you here just as they were building MGM?

Yes, I was.

Right across the road, Greg Street didn't go clear through. And the lady that owned the feedlots committed suicide. She didn't want to leave there.

That was just several years ago.

Yes. Well, that's where we would drive them to, and then they would load them on the train. I can't remember her name. My husband would know. [That would be] 8, 10 years, ago, I would say. She wanted to retain her property there, and they felt that she couldn't retain it and MGM go in there. I think the county condemned her, whatever it is. Made her sell, anyway.

Yes, I remember that. And a lot of people feel that led to her death.

Yes. Oh, it definitely did. My husband and I had a long conversation with her approximately 2 weeks before she committed suicide.

Now, you said you drove the cattle in, and that was early on. What happened later? Did you still drive them, or did you transport them?

No, then we trucked them. Sometimes we'd have 6 big cattle trucks come out and pick them up, and they'd take them right straight to the feedlot in Pittsburg, California.

Where were the cattle trucks from? Do you remember which shipper owned those?

No, Dick would. I knew the drivers.. [laughs], and I would always fix them a snack when they'd get the.... See, after the unions got so strong here, the men that drove the cattle were not allowed to help load them. That was a different union, or something. They had it designated that the driver was not to help load the cattle. So he'd come into the house and have some cake or cookies or coffee while they were loading the cattle.

From there they were trucked down to Pittsburg, California?

Yes.

Now, you got paid for these cattle.

We had to have them in the feedlot 120 days. Then they were sold, most of the time to Swift & Company. We had several buyers, but....

It's interesting on a ranch, for non-ranch or nonfarm people, to understand the money, the income cash-flow. How often would you get a cash income on the ranch?

Once a year.

When was that?

After we culled them out.—7, 8 year old cows we would sell in October. Well, no, I'd say twice a year, I guess, too, because we would sell the cows as we gathered them, first part of October. We would sell the cows to a buyer, a packer. They would load them and ship them out of there, and then the heifers and the steers we would send to the feedlot. The best heifers we kept for breeding. At the same time we sold the cows, we nearly always sold bulls, too, but I can't remember if we sold them in the fall. I think we would take the bulls away from the cattle May, June and July, so that we wouldn't have any calves born in December, January and February.

Why was that?

Because of the winter storms.

Being so bad and you didn't want the young stock...?

Didn't want young stock.

Were the calves generally born out on the range?

Oh, yes. Most all of them.

Did you have to oversee that very much?

No. If we were riding, or sometimes just before we would turn out in March or something, the calves would start coming. Especially the heifers—we would watch the heifers with their first calf. But after that they seldom had problems.

Did you do anything special with your bulls? Did you ever breed a line of bulls on the ranch, particularly?

No. We bought our bulls, because, you see, we would have the mother cow there and maybe 3 years of her calves or more. If the heifer did real well, why, we would keep her maybe 7, 8, 9 years for calves. So, if we kept any of the male calves for a bull, why, chances are they would breed with their own...

Siblings.

Yes.

Did you generally sell off the bull calves, or did you cut them and...?

We cut them and made steers out of them.

You mentioned off the tape some information on milking. Would you want to give me that information again about your milk cows?

Well, we always had 2 milk cows, and we tried to have one come fresh in the spring and one come fresh in the fall.

What do you mean by come fresh?

Have a calf. [laughter]

That's a farmer term that some people may not know. Why would you try to do that? What's the purpose of rotating them?

Well, we tried to let the cow go dry for about 2 months before she had a calf. Two or

3 months before. Then we'd rely on the other cow for milk, you see.

What was the purpose of drying up the cow before she had a calf?

Then she gave better milk for the new calf, and we thought that the calf fetus had a better chance to grow properly, too.

So you had at least one milk cow going at a time?

Yes.

Did you do the milking, or who was responsible?

Oh, once in a great while. But the hired man was responsible for milking the cow, night and morning.

If you used the milk, you had to have a separator.

Yes. The hired man separated; he'd bring the milk in fresh, right away. Before he brought it in, he'd feed the cats and the dogs with the whole milk. Then he'd bring it in and separate it.

How did the separator work? Can you describe that?

Well, we had 2 [or] 3 gallon bottles, and the cream would go into that and the milk would go backinto another bucket. It absolutely separated it. It had a large bowl on the top—it had metal plates—and as it went through the plates it would separate the cream from the milk.

That's something that so many people today have never even seen, because we get homogenized milk now, so we don't get the cream. I think city children today have no idea about that kind of thing.

My husband's little cousin, the one that he was staying with down in California when I met him, their boy— we always called him Mike Knox; his name was Graham Earl [Knox]—the first year he came up that I was there, he was about 8, I guess, and he wouldn't drink the milk. We asked him, "Why? What's the matter with this milk? This is good milk." He said, "It comes from a dirty old cow! We get it in a bottle!"

Did you ever cure him of that? [laughter]

Yes. Oh, yes. He got so that he really liked milk. [laughter]

Well, that was always a treat for us when we'd go down to the barn, to get the milk right out of the cow. Because as town kids, you didn't get that, and it tasted so different.

Yes. You see, a lot of times it was warm. When we'd first bring it in, it would be kind of warm. He had been accustomed to the cold milk.

Right. How much milk would you normally get in a milking?

About 3 to 5 gallon from a cow.

So that would be anywhere from 6 to 8 gallons a day?

When she first had her calf, we'd get 5 gallon, each milking. Then she would go down to about 3 gallon, gradually.

What did you do with all that milk and cream?

We would separate it and use the cream. Anyone that came that didn't have cows or anything, we always gave them, oh, 4, 5 pounds of butter to take home with them and probably 2, 3 quarts of cream. And it was thick cream. You could spoon it out of the dish.

I know. Just sitting there, it sets up.

Yes.

So you made your own butter. What kind of a churn did you use?

We had a wooden churn that...we'd never had the stick, or in my time we didn't have the stick. We had a round churn that....

Was it in a wooden container, totally wooden?

Yes, wooden container, it's right over here. [points to churn][laughter]

Oh, yes. I see. It's interesting that you kept that.

You had to have a thermometer, or I did. Now, my husband's mother could put her finger in it and just about tell if it was the right temperature. But I never was able to.

You mean when the butter was the right temperature?

The cream. To churn. If it was too warm, it wouldn't come; it wouldn't separate for butter. If it was too cold, you'd just churn yourself to death before the butter would come. It's just like you do today with whipped cream. If you whip it too much, it curdles. Well, that's the beginning of butter.

Right. Did you ever make cheese on the ranch?

No, I never made cheese. The people that had the ranch first, that I told you took up the ranch, the Piersons that the Indians killed, they made cheese. That was their trade.

That's what they started the ranch for?

Yes. But we never made cheese.

What did you do with the skim milk?

Well, quite often, we'd make cottage cheese. You'd just let it sour and coagulate, and then we'd put it on the back of the stove and that would separate the whey from the cottage cheese. Then we would strain it and add a little cream and salt and make cottage cheese. We'd use a lot of cottage cheese. Evidently they did in Denmark. We made pies with cottage cheese; we added cottage cheese—we would beat the cottage cheese and add it to pumpkin pie, because they felt that...you see, you were getting a lot of nourishment from the cottage cheese. Once in a great while, I still do that.

I'm going to have to try that. That sounds like it would be really fine.

But you don't use the big curds. You beat it.

Small curd.

Yes. The skimmed milk left over—many times we would throw it over into the reservoir.

You were telling me about frogs and you. Would you like to relate that story?

[laughter] Well, of course, I don't think there's anyone living that isn't afraid of rattlesnakes. And when something moves,

why, it's either...and we didn't really welcome mice or rats, either. Of course, they'd come in from the field, because we had field mice and all. If anything got into the cellar—as we called it, the rock cellar—where we kept the milk and butter and things, why, you couldn't use whatever they had been near. So if I would go out there and a frog had gotten in.... You see, we kept the milk cellar very cold, with the wet rags on each window, and so it was a haven for the frogs. Whenever I would go out there and a frog would jump—you didn't know what was a frog or a rat or a mouse—and so I would kill them. That worried the children. They loved the frogs.

I'll bet it did! [laughter] Today they vaccinate cattle for brucellosis, bangs as they call it.

We did, too, as long as I can remember.

Did you do that yourself, you and your husband?

My husband did. They'd vaccinate when they branded.

Why did they vaccinate for brucellosis?

Well, I think it's brucellosis that causes stillborn calves. It's a lifetime vaccination.

There's something that people can pick up from cows. Was it brucellosis?

Well, and tuberculosis.

Did you vaccinate for that, also?

No, I don't think they ever did out there, that I know of. Now, whether there was some of that in the brucellosis or not, I don't know. But they vaccinated every spring; at the same time that we would brand, why, they were vaccinated. While they were down on the ground, why, you'd vaccinate them.

You would brand in the spring and then turn the cattle out. Did you have to drive them into the mountains or out to summer pasture?

Yes.

You were telling me an interesting story about you one time at roundup or on a drive.

You mean the one with old Mary?

Yes, that one.

Well, every summer we took so many cattle up on the top of Mt. Petersen. But that was quite a while after we would brand. We would brand in about the latter part of April, the first of May all of the calves that had been born through the winter. Then we would take about, oh, probably 200 cows and their calves up on top of Mt. Petersen in July sometime, because that's when the grass would be the best up there. We'd leave the cattle up there and then we' d come down. Well, the horses knew they were headed for home and they would come down rather fast. So my husband was behind me, and I was on this horse by the name of Mary. I hadn't been up on top of the mountain before that. She was really coming down, and she'd plant her front feet to hold herself to steady herself, but her hind feet would slide down this sharp place in the mountain. So I took my hand and patted her on the shoulder and I said, "Oh, Mary. Do be careful!" because I didn't feel I had control of her. [laughter] They kidded me about that all my life. "Oh, Mary. Do be careful!

[laughter] When you drive up toward Doyle is Petersen Mountain the big long mountain that you follow for so long?

On the right. That's Petersen Mountain.

That is steep!

Yes. What is the real name for Hogsback on Petersen Mountain? When you go out the highway, you go by Hogsback. It's a little mountain that sits west of Petersen. We always called her Hogsback, but I don't know where it got its name or what it is.

Did you ever get any teasing from the family because you grew up on a farm as opposed to a ranch?

Yes. And I was very.. .the minute someone would call it a farm, "Oh, you live out on a farm, north of Reno?" then I would tell them the difference between a farm and a ranch.

Which is?

Which is, they cultivate a farm, and a ranch you do not cultivate it.

You grow stock on a ranch?

Yes.

Did you have mail delivery at the ranch?

No. We had a box in Reno...well, for years we had a box in Reno. Dick's aunt Sophie, Mama Hattie's half brother—Uncle Ross Petersen, brother-in-law Mike and sister Dooley (Clara) had the Washoe County Title and Guaranty Company, and so we got our mail at their box. They would keep it until we'd come to town, and we'd get our mail.

Did this prove any hardship for you, being away from your family and things?

No, I had weaned myself away pretty much in the 3 years that I was training.

Did you ever get back to Washington much to see your family?

Every other year. And every other year we went to California [to see] the classmates and friends and my husband's relatives. My husband had an aunt down there, and we'd go down and stay 2, 3 days with my classmates and 2, 3 days with his relatives. The next year, we'd go home.

To see your family?

Yes.

Did you get many visits from your family to the ranch? Did any of them ever come visit you after you were out there?

Well, my mother was very ill as long as I can remember. She had gone to Portland Sanitarium and had major surgery. At that time they said she had cancer. They gave her radium, and they burned the liver. She was one of the first patients at Portland Sanitarium to ever have the radium. From then on, she was quite ill. But my sisters would come down. Some of them would come down and stay all summer, off and on.

Did they enjoy that?

Oh, yes, very much. And they'd bring their children, who had never been on a ranch.

You showed me pictures of guests. You'd mentioned that the ranch would have guests

come by, famous people and such. One of your visitors, in your pictures, was Roy Rogers. Would you want to tell me about how that relationship developed?

Yes. One winter the deer hunters came out there to hunt. We had quite a snowstorm—4, 5, 6 inches. One of the men—his name was Mel Williams—he had the Dodge dealership in Marysville, [California]. He came up; he was a very good friend of Roy Rogers. So when we got the snowstorm, why, they couldn't sleep out in their sleeping bags. They came up to the house and wanted to know if they could use the bunkhouse, that they had their quilts and so on and so forth. So we put them up in the bunkhouse and part of them in the barn, because there wasn't enough room in the bunkhouse for all of them. They had out-of-state license for hunting deer. So before it was over, we had them in for dinner and all, because it was cold. We'd fix meals for them up at the main house where my husband's mother lived. So the next year he wanted to know if it was OK if he'd bring a few more visitors, that he would love to bring Roy Rogers up there. So the next year, Roy Rogers came up and a couple of years after that, why, there were several members of the Sons of the Pioneers that came up with him.

Can you remember the first year that Roy Rogers visited?

Oh, Krestine must've been about 10, I guess. That'd be about 1949—right around 1950, 1949.

Was Roy married to Dale at this time?

Yes.

Did she ever come along?

Oh, yes. She got her deer up there on Mt. Petersen. I think she came about 3, 4 years.

Did you go hunting with them, too?

No, I never was a.... No, because I always had the meals to get when they'd come back down. We'd give them breakfast before they left, and then while they were gone, why, I would do my kitchen work and have lunch for them and partially prepare my dinner for them. They'd stay a few nights. Big parties would come in. We have clippings on that, also, where they would entertain them in the evening. They told us to feel free to invite our friends, and Roy would play the piano and Dale would sing.

Now, did they hold these gatherings in the main house?

Yes, in our home.

You didn't have any problem with that? These people kind of coming in and...?

Oh, no. They were all acquaintances, friends from Doyle. We knew them all. My children would go down there to their spring parties and their Christmas party. See, we didn't have enough children to put on a Christmas party or a program or anything, so our children joined right in with the Doyle children.

How did you find Roy Rogers? What kind of a person is he?

Oh, he was very nice and so wonderful with the kids. Then, 2 years, he brought up Sandy and Dusty, and one time they went from our place up to...I believe it was Idaho, or Klamath Falls...after they hunted the deer. We

brought [the deer] in[to] Reno and put them in a cooler, and they went from our place up to Klamath Falls duck hunting. So they left Sandy and Dusty with me.

Do you still keep in touch with them at all?

Yes. We do. Not as much as we used to, of course, as time has gone on. But my daughter, the year before she finished high school, why, Dale talked her into going down to Hollywood and taking a modeling course. She went down and took the modeling course under Ritter's wife. I can't think of his first name.

Tex?

Tex Ritter. She was the teacher for the modeling school in Hollywood.

What did your children's friends think about Roy Rogers's coming to the ranch?

Well, just like all children! [laughter]

Like I would've!

I don't know if I said that before, but I think that was the hardest meals, at first, that I ever prepared in my life—[those that] I prepared for Roy and Dale, because I expected them to be very cool and aloof, and they weren't at all. They were just like the family. I served them just family style.

Did they mind all the neighbor children coming around?

No, they told us to bring in the neighbor children.

Oh, how understanding.

And they would entertain them, I'd say from 7:30 to 9:30—probably about 2 hours. They were thrilled to death, and I always prepared cake or, of course, we had a lot of milk, and we'd have hot chocolate and cake and popcorn and so make a party out of it.

What other famous or well-known individuals would come? Or did any?

Yes, Cindy Walker came up with them one year. Of course, she doesn't hunt. But she just came up to be on the ranch and be with them. I'd have to think about it a little while... several of the Sons of the Pioneers. The world champion L.A. Dodgers came up, 11 of them. They hunted pheasants and fished through the ice. They stayed at the Riverside Hotel.

You said as an introduction to all this that you had friends who would come out and deer hunt on the ranch.I know it's customary now to ask a rancher before you just invade his property to hunt. Did you have a lot of people who would come out to Red Rock to hunt?

Yes. And poach, as we called it. They would come out and really be off the main part of the ranch, but they'd go up on Mt. Petersen. Sometimes they'd park over on the California side of Mt. Petersen and then walk over the mountain. Quite often they would get lost, and they would come down to the ranch. Oh, we've had them walk in there at 11:00 at night and say, "Well, I can't find my car. I left it right up here." Then when my husband would question them— maybe their car would be on the other side of the mountain.

These were people who hunted the ranch but didn't ask for permission?

Yes.

Did a lot of people do that?

Oh, yes. Hundreds. You can come around Reno now and a lot of the older people or different ones would say, "Oh, I went out there with my dad hunting, lots of times."

But you'd never know it?

We didn't know it, no.

Did you resent this?

No, just so they stayed off of the main part of the ranch and didn't bother the cattle. And shut gates!

Did you lose many cattle to hunters?

Not very many, no. Once in a great while. But they took care of all the sage hen. They would come out deer hunting, and if they didn't get a deer, or if they caught the sage hen out in the brush and had a chance, they'd shoot the sage hen. They really made them extinct.

Sage hen wasn't exactly in season then, was it?

No.

Was there always a season for deer, that you remember?

Yes, as long as I remember. My husband remembers when there wasn't deer season, but I don't.

What about chukar? Was there ever any good chukar hunting on the ranch?

Well, they planted chukars out there in about 1954, 1955; they introduced chukars out there, and then there were quite a few, yes.

You would get a lot of chukar hunters coming through, also?

Yes. But you know, chukars are very smart. And you get to one spring and they're up at the next.

To get back to deer hunting. When a hunter would come up and ask permission to hunt on the ranch, did they often stay overnight, like up on the mountain?

Yes. Or in their car. At that time, there were cars, and they would sleep in their car, and., then get up before daylight so they'd be up on the mountain at daylight.

Did you ever have any problems with that at all?

No, no. We never really had big problems.

When Roy Rogers and other people would come up to hunt, did they ever stay out overnight, or did they always come back at night?

No. They all came back to dinner.

After you married Mr. Dickinson and moved out to the ranch, did you ever practice nursing again?

Oh, yes. I took care of all the neighbors. [laughter]

Really? Could you call yourself a midwife, or...?

Yes. I didn't ever call myself a midwife, but many times, the people up north, from Doyle to Milford...well, all over the valley there.. .when someone would come into labor— of course, we always knew who was expecting—and someone would come down,

they would bring 2 cars. One would turn into Red Rock and pick me up; the other one would go straight down the highway to the hospital here in Reno. Then I'd come in and stay with the woman until the baby arrived.

At the hospital?

At the hospital. The Rollands, and the Harwoods, and, oh, I couldn't tell you how many. [laughter]

Which hospital was this, usually?

Mostly, Saint Mary's.

Were there other hospitals in Reno at that time?

Well, there was Washoe General, but it was a small one. That's now the Washoe Medical Center.

Did you ever go out to the ranches to, say, sit with a woman who was birthing?

No, because I always claimed that a woman, if she was expecting a child, her place was in the hospital. That's the way I was trained.

Did the ranch people have any problem with this? Was there any conflict with their values on this?

No.

For minor little things, say, like a child's falling down and breaking an arm or something, were you ever called...?

Then I'd bring them in. They'd call me, or if a man had a stroke.... Mr. [Clark] Rolland had a heart attack, and several had strokes. In fact, a lot of them. Someone from the ranch would come right down and get Judie. The doctors here in town—Dr. Brown, Dr. Robinson, Dr. Morrison—all gave me morphine tablets and so on and so forth. I would go out, and if they were in pain, I would give them a tablet, and we'd get them loaded in a car or the back of a truck or something and get them to Reno.

So you were quite a big help out on that end of the valley up there?

Yes. And, of course, that made for close friendship.

I'll bet it did.

If I felt they were doing all right, if it was somebody that was just having stomach flu or.. something like that, why, I would give them medication for the stomach flu, and probably some enemas and things, and if no blood showed up or anything and if they were beginning to feel a little better, then I'd go on home. We'd be in contact.

Yes. Did you ever continue your education at all? Did you read journals? Did you keep up with what was going on?

Oh, yes. Constantly. I took the RN nursing journal.

Did the doctors ever supply you with articles that they may have come across?

Yes, and new medications. Well, I'd tell them something about so-and-so; I didn't know what to do for so-and-so, or something, and they'd say, "Well, if that happens again, why don't you try something else." There were 2 or 3 patients out there that had problems with aspirin. They'd tell me [to] try Tylenol, or try this or try that or....

Did you feel you had a good working relationship and respect from the doctors?

Oh, yes.

I'd think you would; you'd be doing them a favor, in a sense, helping out. Did you ever get paid for your nursing in this way?

Well, quite often. A lot of times they'd give us gifts and a lot of times I wouldn't accept it; they were close friends. The children, especially...oh, in the summertime, maybe the mother would go home with a crate of apricots or something; the kid would end up with diarrhea and vomiting, and so I'd go out and take care of them.

When I first went to the ranch it was quite a thing for me, because I had never seen anything like it before. Old Mrs. [Rosa] Galeppi was quite ill. So they sent to Susanville for this doctor to come down and treat her. He told her, just before he left, he said, "You've got to have this for your liver, and you've got to have something else for your gallbladder and something else for your digestion." He went up outside and he opened the trunk of the car, and he had all these pills. . .loose in the back of the car. He was the dirtiest old thing I ever saw in my life—of course, I had been trained for sanitation—and he'd reach in and get a handful of pills. He'd get the blue pills with one hand and then in another pile were red pills and in another.... They weren't even in paper bags. They were just in piles in the back of the car. Took me a long time to get over that one.

What about medical practice on the ranch? When you came out here, you'd had your formal nursing degree and book learning. Did you run into folk medicine, as it's often called today? Can you think of any of those things that...?

Yes. Well, lots of times it would help, I thought. I felt that they had really good reason to use what they had. But I always took ipecac with me for the children so that I could empty their stomach. And I always had a catheter with me. I wouldn't say quite often, but occasionally, men have prostate trouble and couldn't urinate, and I would catheterize them and tell them to get into Reno as fast as you can to so-and-so.

Can you think of any home remedies that maybe even were used on the Dickinson ranch?

I was trained in a Seventh Day Adventist hospital, and they tried to give less medication than many other hospitals. Consequently, we used what they called the fomentations—the hot cloths. I would take a wool blanket, cut it up and fold it up like you would a towel, wet it thoroughly just so it didn't drip, and put it in the oven till you couldn't handle it at all. I'd grab it out of the oven and wrap it up in a towel and put that on somebody's back or something, if they'd fallen off the horse. Or sometimes we'd use ice and whatever it seemed. If it was just a bruise, a terrible bruise or something, why, we'd use the ice. But if it was circulation, and they'd had a backache for 2 or 3 days, sometimes.... As a rule, they'd wait a day or 2 before they'd even bother me because they felt it was an imposition. So if they'd had this backache for 2 or 3 days, and there wasn't a great deal of swelling, then I'd use hot and cold. I'd put on this hot fomentation, leave it on about 5 minutes, and then I would put ice on it for about a minute or 2 to get the circulation going back and forth.

Did you find any great conflict, then, between your nurses training and any home remedies that you might have run into?

No, no, I didn't.

Talking about medicine, is there a cemetery on the Red Rock ranch?

No. There was a cemetery on the Winnemucca ranch. My husband's father had 2 brothers, I believe, and a sister buried out there. My husband and I went out there about, oh, 10 years ago—about 1975, 1973—and we found one of the little graves. But the others were, oh, in an orchard, and the fence had fallen down and... no, there was no cemetery out there.

Where is the Winnemucca ranch, exactly? How would one get there?

About halfway between Red Rock and Pyramid Lake. We went through the hills to get there then. Now you can go out the highway, then you turn when you get almost to...well, you get out where they have the horses. What do they call that? Palomino Valley. When you get to Palomino Valley, you turn due north and you can see it up the canyon there; it's a beautiful ranch.

There's still a ranch there?

Oh, yes. They run cattle. Ed Settelmeyer had a sheep ranch right next to them; he lived there, but he didn't lamb there. He lambed out on the desert somewhere.

The cemetery is near the orchard on the ranch?

It was <u>in</u> the orchard.

Where are Mr. Dickinson's parents buried?

They're buried in Reno, both of them.

Do you know how the Red Rock ranch got its name?

Yes, from the vermillion rocks at the entrance of [the canyon], coming down from Susanville. That's the first thing you see are the red vermillion rocks.

I'm familiar with that. Coming from Reno, it'd be right there at the head of Long Valley, or partway through Long Valley?

Yes.

Do you know who named it Red Rock?

Oh, the Indians. Years and years before. They had an Indian name for it; I couldn't tell you what it is. But it's similar to Mt. Rose. The Indians named Mt. Rose, and they named the Red Rock Valley. The mountain was snow covered and white and in the morning sun it had a rosie glow. A contrast to Indians' coming in from [the] desert.

Do you know any of the origins of the other geographic places on the ranch? You've mentioned Petersen Mountain.

Well, that was named because a Mr. Petersen developed the ranch there at the foot of Petersen Mountain. They would make the remark that they were going out to Petersen's, so the mountain was right there. Then Fred's Mountain.. .my husband will have to tell you. To the north of Red Rock, there is Fort Sage, and when the early settlers come from Utah, they would come through there. They had this

fort up on top, and they'd watch for their fire or smoke, and they'd warn them of Indians, if they were out there. Fort Sage, I think, is darn near as high as, I don't know, Donner or something. Anyway, it's extremely high. Dick can tell you the elevation. But they could see it for miles and miles—see the fire. They'd build a sagebrush fire.

Was there a real fort there, or did they just call it Fort Sage?

Yes, they made a little fort up there. Men stayed there to help the emigrants that were coming.

It wasn't an army post, though?

I believe so. Yes, it was. But there's Petersen Mountain, and Fort Sage, and Seven Lakes. There's kind of a long mountain from west to east, and there's seven lakes up on top.

Any good fishing?

Too small. No.

I have read about a Red Rock ranch that was owned by an Orrin C. Ross.

Yes, we call it the Red Rock Valley ranch. It's right down below the Red Rock ranch.

So, there <u>were</u> 2 Red Rock ranches. I found that very confusing.

It was <u>very</u> confusing, and after I was at the ranch for many years, an attorney here in Reno by the name of [Willis C.] McCluskey purchased that ranch. He charged a great deal of feed and stuff up at Albers teed store, he would just come in and sign Red Rock. We would come to town and we would have a [bill], or they'd send us a bill for $1,700 or something for feed, and it was McCluskey's. So my husband went to court...anyway, he had an attorney; they took it up. They had to rename it the Red Rock Valley ranch.

So that did cause some confusion?

Yes, it did. Now, I don't know if it did years and years before or not. It was called the Ross ranch and it was a relative of Silas Ross. I think they were cousins. The early Ross, before Silas's time, probably an uncle or, anyway, back another generation, had someone out there that lived with Indians. A squaw lady. They had children that went to school with Dick's mother and sisters from, as we call it, Red Rock Valley ranch. They went to school together. And the attorney [Melvin E.] Jepson, here in town, they had a ranch almost into Dry Valley. He was a longtime attorney here in Reno, and he also went to school with them.

The Red Rock Valley ranch and the Red Rock ranch where <u>you</u> lived, they were adjacent?

Yes, but we had a little sandhill between.

Do you remember when that name change was?

I would say about 1945, 1948, right in there sometime.

How did McCluskey feel about being forced into changing the name of the ranch? Do you know?

Well, he didn't like it. But they took the new name. McCluskey was an attorney here in Reno, and he practiced a great deal up at Virginia City.

I know you've had 2 children. Would you please tell me again their names and when they were born?

Margaret Krestine was born in 1937, and Larry was born in 1939, 2 years apart. I had to have family planning because I had to help cook for the hay men, and so I had my children in the spring so that I would feel like helping to do the cooking for haying.

You and the cows, right? [laughter]

Yes. Me and the cows. That's right. [laughter)

That's an interesting consideration. You did actually plan them?

Yes, I surely did. But Krestine, we called her Margaret for almost 9 months. Grandma Petersen came down one day, and she was leaning over Krestine—she was on the davenport—and Grandma was crying just like a child. She was... well, she was 85 then and just really crying, wiping the tears off. She said, "I never named any of my children after Krestine, and I never allowed any of my grandchildren to be called Krestine. They named you Krestine, and they call you Margaret."

And I walked in—I'd been outside; I was getting wood for the stove to wash—and I came in and she was crying and I said, "Why, Grandma! I didn't know that you cared."

"Oh, yes. She's my baby."

She picked her up and loved her and I said, "Well, we'll call her Krestine."

"Oh, you can't now," she said.

And we never, never again called her Margaret. She was called Krestine.

Grandma's name was Krestine?

She was her great-grandmother, yes.

Where was she living?

Well, she lived with one daughter ox another. She helped raise the children, Frances and Dick. When they came to Reno to school, they bought her a home on the corner of First and Washington. She took care of Dick and Frances when they went to high school. Then, when they finished high school, she went down to the oldest daughter [Sophia]. She had 2 children—Charlotte was younger than my husband—and they had another baby, Graham Earl Knox. Oh, he must've been 15 years younger than my husband. So she stayed with them and raised him while both mother and father worked in Los Angeles.

Dick's grandmother raised Frances and Dick after they left the ranch out there. See, they could only go to school at the Red Rock till Frances finished the eighth grade. Then they moved to Reno. My husband was in the seventh grade. He entered the seventh grade in here, and Frances went to high school. Then, when they finished high school, she went down to Los Angeles and did the same thing with her older daughter's children, and then she divided her time between the 3 daughters.

There were hospitals in Reno at the time your children were born.

Yes. Saint Mary's. Saint Mary's had 26 beds.

You went to the hospital to have your babies?

Yes, I surely did! I saw too many problems—in the maternity ward—that I definitely demanded my children be born in a hospital.

Did your nursing knowledge make you think twice about having children, knowing you were going to be out on the ranch?

No, no.

Because you planned your family?

Yes. [laughter] I wanted a family, and I wanted 2. I didn't believe in one child, playing alone, and being out there alone. In fact, I didn't believe in it even in town.

What was prenatal care back then? Today there's such an emphasis on the mother taking care of the baby before the baby's even born.

We didn't have any of that. We visited the doctor about once a month.I came in to Dr. Morrison, in about the first of December, in 1936. He told me to definitely come back in 3 weeks, and it was 10 weeks to the day before I could even get out of the ranch [when] I came back to Dr. Morrison.

What did he say?

Well, he understood because of the weather. If you couldn't get here, you couldn't get here.

Were you worried at all about not being able to get to see him?

Yes, and in getting medicine. My husband came in, I think twice, horseback. He would go down to the highway, horseback, and tie up his horse in the junipers. Then the first car that come along, why, he'd bum a ride to Reno and come in town. Then his sister would take him back to the Red Rock Road.

Were midwives common then?

Yes, out a ways. Clear out at Pyramid Lake or Denio, [Nevada] or up in there they were very common.

Did the doctor often come out to the ranch at all?

Yes. Dr. Robinson asked me one time if I wanted to go out to Mrs. Blackmore out at the Big Canyon ranch. The woman was going to have her second child, and she was 42 years old. The other had been born when she was about 22, I guess, back east someplace. She came out for a divorce and married Beverly Blackmore and they had this little girl, and they named her Brooke. Dr. Robinson wanted to know—I was getting off a case for him—and he wanted to know if I wanted to go out. I said, "Oh, I don't know."

"Well," he said, "everybody else is going; you might as well go too." [laughter] He really expected that he might have trouble, [but] they didn't have.

What did it cost you to have your babies in the hospital?

Are you talking about me or other people?

You. What did it cost you?

Well, it cost me $45 for Larry. I had a telephone in the room and a private room. But, of course, I was a registered nurse, and I had nursed there, and Dr. Morrison didn't charge me a dime. So I paid for medication, and I told Larry that's why he was no good, because he was too cheap! [laughter]

Did you get special treatment because you were a nurse?

Oh, sure. All the nurses come in to see me and....

What would other women have to pay?

Around $50. I mean for the hospital, then plus their doctor and then anesthetic.

What did the doctor charge back then?

Between $50 and $100. Now it's up in the thousands, isn't it?

Yes, by the time you even get to the hospital, often.

Yes.

We've talked about your children's education, but, being a ranch family, did your children become involved in 4-H?

Yes. I was so afraid they'd end up hillbillies. was always importing children to come and stay a week, stay the weekend. If they were too young to stay a week, why, they'd stay the weekend—the Galeppi children, the Rolland children, all down the valley. Then some of my friends from Reno, their children would come out.

But just before we say this, let me tell you that when I first came to Reno, they were just moving Saint Mary's from across the road where the parking is now. That was the old Saint Mary's Hospital. We went from the hospital through the tunnel to the old hospital, under the street, for our meals. And I had the third patient in the new hospital, where it is located now. I believe it was a 20-bed, or 26-bed hospital.

When was that moved?

That was moved in about 1930. Shortly after that... no, it was after we were married...I came in and I took care of a woman by the name of Mrs. Joy True. She was the manager of KOH. She went into the hospital for female surgery, and she wanted to know—I took night, most of the time—and she said, "If I need you tomorrow night, how do I get in touch with you?"

I said, "Well, you can't, out at the ranch. But," I said, "I'll wait here till about 3:00. I'll go up to my husband's aunt's and sleep. Then by 3:00 you should know how you're feeling—if you have a temperature or so on and so forth." The next day when I came in to see how she was doing, why, she said, "Well, we're going to fix up some kind of a thing. You don't have a phone?"

I said, "No."

"Well," she said, "let's do it this way. When we come on the air in the morning, we have a code of how many kilowatts and where we're located, and so on [the required broadcast of station identification]. And," she said, "I'll find out what time around either 3:00 or 4:00 that we have a minute or 2, and we will call you by that code; we won't tell you by name. But if Dr. Brown or Dr. Morrison or Dr. Muller or any of them want you to work, why, we'll call you by code.

So, I went home, and about 4 or 5 days, why, 4:00 the code came on. I was by the radio, and I had it tuned in. When I arrived about a quarter to 7:00 at Saint Mary's, why, Sister Seraphine and Sister Gerard and Sister Rita [were] out on the porch, and they couldn't

believe their eyes. "How did you know to come in?"

I said, "Well, they called me."

"No, we didn't hear them call you." So then I told them about the code. And for that I paid one dollar each time they called.

Do you remember the code?

Well, just like I said, how many kilowatts or where the KOH was located and some other little something about their business that they gave every morning at 7:00 when they'd come on the air. They would give it again when they went off the air. But the only days that they gave it during the day was when I was to come to work.

Well, that was really a novel idea.

That gave me time to get ready; then it was about a 50, 60 minute drive in the Red Rock dirt road.

Yes. Let's go back to 4-H. You said your children belonged to 4-H.

Oh, yes.

How did that start?

Well, I really don't know. We started in Farm Bureau, oh, I don't know, way back when. Of course, we went to the Lassen area—Lassen Farm Bureau—because it came down to Doyle; that was included in the California Farm Bureau. Then shortly after I started being a Farm Bureau member, why, they asked me to be a 4-H leader in that area. So I had all the children from Doyle clear up to the 1-Herlong cutoff.

What is Farm Bureau exactly?

California Farm Bureau Federation, and Farm Bureau is a national. It's for farmers and ranchers, fruit growers—all types of agricultural men. They have a women's division and a state chairman; each county has a chairman. Then they have a district, and I finally was chairman of District 7 in California. I went on to be state vice chairman and then state chairman...7 northern counties.

Now, were you involved in Nevada Farm Bureau at all or in Nevada farm-ranch organizations?

Yes, but not a great deal. I would go to their state meetings and represent California at the women's state meeting.

Was that because of your interaction with the California women in 4-H?

With 4-H. I knew the women, and I took Krestine to Red Bluff...well, Larry, too. I took the other children, the children from Hallelujah Junction and from Susanville, down for a district contest. They had a district contest first. Then the ones that won the district would go to the state.

Doyle had a 4-H chapter, and I think there were 2 or 3 children that were signed up. The Rolland girl had a steer, and then there was a family in Doyle by the name of [John] Robinson, and he had a pig, and they raised it for 4-H. They didn't have any leader south of Milford. There were 2 children at Hallelujah Junction, and the little girl, Arlene Stoy, we put her in sewing, and I taught sewing. Krestine was 10 years old, so that was 1947. She just turned 10.

Did Washoe County have a 4-H program at that time?

Yes, but, you see, that was quite a bit further. We would have our meetings in Doyle. Then someone from Susanville could come down to the meeting to advise me.

The main office for the Doyle 4-H county extension was Susanville?

Was Susanville.

So that was Lassen County?

Yes. We'd go up there about, oh, once a month or every 2 months. Then they would show their animals in the Susanville county fair.

How often would you have the meetings in Doyle?

Once a week...especially during sewing season and all summer.

So you met all summer, too?

Oh, yes.

What about during the school year? Did that pose any hardships?

Oh, we met at 5:00. But sometimes during fall and early spring like it is now—snowing—why, we would meet right after school. I'd go down at 3:30. We'd have our meeting, and I'd look at their sewing and so on and so forth. If they were having problems, Saturday they would bring their sewing up to the ranch, and I would help them up there. Mrs. [Evie] Polland had a sewing machine in a little cabinet— cabinet sewing machine. We usually had 3. Mrs. [Doris] Stoy at Hallelujah had a cabinet sewing machine and Arlene [Stoy] would bring hers. I'd built it up till one year I had 27 in knitting. The hardest job I ever did in my life was teach a left-handed child [Arlene Stoy] to knit. I worked with her for a month— I know a month—and we were getting nowhere. Finally, Grandma Petersen came out to the ranch, and she said, "Well, that's easy. Have her face you and do what you're doing."

Well, that's a novel approach! [laughter]

So she faced me, and what I was doing with my right hand she did with her left hand, and I taught her to knit. In fact, I had a Christmas card from her this year telling me that she still valued the knitting. Her folks had a service station at the crossroads going to Portola. I would go and pick her up, and she started in the 4-H first and then went on into the Make It Yourself With Wool. In the letter that she wrote me the other day—she is married and now a grandmother—she was knitting and crocheting for her grandchild, and she said, "It's all because of you."

That's got to make you feel good.

Yes. It <u>was</u> a nice feeling.

So you became involved, then, because you were needed?

That's right.

Did it bother your children having you as a leader at all?

Yes, somewhat. Larry wished he had somebody else. Krestine wasn't that way.

What kind of 4-H projects did your children have?

Well, they started out with sewing and the steers. And then Larry branched into bees; he was breeding bees when he started college. Then one year—maybe you're interested—down by the Long Valley Creek there's a hot spring that goes right under the Western Pacific Railroad?

I know where it is.

Yes. There were bees down there in some trees. So he wanted me to go down and help—they found a hive way up in the tree—and he wanted me to go down and help him get this hive that had landed in the tree. I told him I couldn't, and he said, "Well, you helped Krestine with her sewing! But now I need help.

I said, "Well, OK." So I made myself a net, and I put a drawstring in the top, and then I brought it clear down over my body. We went down, and he climbed the tree, and he had the beehive waiting, and I had the smoker. No, I had the hive—the new hive.

He was going to scrape them off the tree, and they were supposed to fall in the hive. Well, I had left a hole in the top of the net that I had made, and about half of the bees went down inside. The whole family will tell you—it was absolutely a riot! I just absolutely froze; I knew I was going to be stung alive. So he said, "If you'll just stand still and let me scrape...."

I said, "Oh, Larry! Oh, Larry!"

He said, "If you'll just stand still and don't breathe," he said, "they'll go into that hive." So he scraped them down, and they went all over me. He climbed down out of the tree as fast as he could, as soon as he got the main part of the hive and thought he had the queen bee, and I never had one sting. Not one sting.

How old was Larry at this time?

Well, I imagine 12. Not over 12.

Did you make use of the honey from his hives?

He raised bees, see. Yes, we used some of the honey. But he sold honey all through high school. He won quite a prize at the Reno High School for his bees, also.

Are honeys really different? You go to the store, and you see all these different kinds of honey. Are they really all that different?

Oh, yes, according to what feed they get—clover honey; there's sage honey. I don't know just what they call it, but, anyway, the canteloupes and the squash and things down in the Central Valley [of California] when they're getting that—that's quite a mild honey.

How do you control what pollen the bees get on?

Wherever you're located.

What would be the most common thing they would pollinate up on the Red Rock?

Sage. Sage honey.

Did Mr. Dickinson ever become involved in 4-H?

Well, he would take his truck and pick up steers all over the valley and take them down to the big show down in California—Cow Palace—for the kids. [laughter] He'd help that way. Even up here, he'd pick up the steers in Doyle and the pigs in Doyle and different ones and take them up to the Lassen County fair. Then if they didn't sell, why, he'd bring them back home to the children.

Did your kids ever have much of a problem with that—they raise a steer, and then they have to sell it? Was that ever traumatic?

Yes. Especially the lambs. They raised lambs. We'd get lambs from Campbell. He was between us and the Winnemucca ranch, old Bill Campbell. Dick had known him for years. We'd go over there and get bummer lambs.

What is a bummer lamb?

Without a mother. The mother would die. Or if the mother had triplets—they're not frequent. But, occasionally, they have triplets, and they can't possibly raise more than 2. They try to average them up; when a lamb dies they take a lamb from a mother that had twins, and they would take her own lamb and skin it and put the skin over the other lamb, so that when she turned her head to smell it, she would get the smell of her own baby. After about, oh, 2 or 3 times, why, then she would accept that lamb.

So it could be pretty traumatic for your children?

One time we went up to Susanville, and I told Larry, I said, "They're not going to hurt him. Sure, they're going to buy him." And he was sold. So I said, "You know the man that bought him." He had the second-hand store up there in Susanville. And I said, "You know him well. In a few days, you can come up and see him if you want to." He had named him Pat. And I said, "We'll come up and see Pat."

So when we got into the back of the car, why, Larry started sobbing, just crying terrible. That was his first lamb. I said, "Larry, what is the matter?"

"Well," he said, "you lied to me."

I said, "Why?"

"Well," he said, "I went to give Pat another bottle, and he told me not to feed him any more milk because he was going to kill him in the morning."

And that was very traumatic. It went on for about 5 days.

Did he ever forgive you?

Oh, finally, yes.

How old was Larry at this time?

Well, he was just 10, see. Yes, that's when they started 4-H. That was his first lamb, his first year in 4-H.

Did he ever really get used to the fact that the lambs would be killed?

Oh, yes. But then the leader up there.... I can't think of his name, now—an awfully nice man; I just loved him. Anyway, on their records they're supposed to put down what they pay for their calf and how much the feed costs them and what they sell it for; they're supposed to try to show a profit and how many hours work each week or something they put in. He was questioning Larry, and he said, "I don't see how in the world you could make this much money out of a calf." He said, "What did you pay for it?"

Larry says, "We didn't need to pay anything; it didn't cost anything!" He said, "My dad raised it!" [laughter] So he didn't think the calf was worth anything when he got it, and that was fun.

Then when Krestine was in 4-H, she started a butterfly collection, and she showed it all over the state. She went down to Redmond and all over the state with her butterfly collection. Up here in our area

what she collected was mourning cloaks, but she got to trading butterflies with different ones. She had some beautiful butterflies. She studied their habits and everything. She traded with people in Africa and Brazil, and they were very anxious to get the mourning cloaks and she was just as anxious to get the other butterflies, and she has some left.

Had you ever been involved in 4-H as a youngster on the farm?

No.

Was there 4-H back then?

I don't know.

What are your feelings about the value of 4-H?

Absolutely wonderful. Both my children went on to make up their life interest from what they learned in 4-H. feel it's the most valuable group in the whole United States for children.

Why is that?

Even if I lived in town, I would have my children have some type of 4-H, because I feel that it molded the lives of both of our children and the lives of many of the children that we had contact with. I was a 4-H leader for approximately 27 years; I really started when my daughter was 8, but she couldn't join until she was 10. Besides having their animals, they had projects in knitting and sewing, crocheting, home development.... And we were not interior decorators [laughter] like you have come in now, but they decorated with the things that they had made and things that they did, and I feel it was <u>most</u> important.

My daughter went on to be a consultant in sewing; she had her own business, as you can read in several articles. She won many trips. She went to Chicago for Make It Yourself With Wool; she went to California for 4-H...Texas, all over. And then my son came along, and his main object was the raising of beef cattle. But he also had bees, and when he started college he worked with the bee developer, I guess his name would be, a professor down at the University of Davis, and helped pay his way through college with the work that he did on bees.

Today there are even town kids in 4-H. Did you have many town kids in 4-H back then?

They had a few from Susanville, but that wouldn't be really what you'd call town, either, to today's standards. But, yes, they have sewing—very prevalent. Then the little boys make bird boxes in town. And quite a few of the town children.. .my neighbor's children have rabbits, and that can be in a small...not right in Los Angeles or something, but there's many things they can do. They also teach them the care of machinery, and that can be done in town.

Do you know why 4-H started? I'm thinking was it to help prepare farm children for the duties?

Yes, one thing, not just the duties, but they kept books. And to show them that it was profitable. They kept an accurate account of their books: what they paid for their calf, what they fed their calves—right on through—how they were gaining. Then that was a must—they had to sell their animals. That was the hardest part for my children when they first started.

You have there in front of you a hat that you said was your daughter's. Can you tell me the purpose of this? It's like a military overseas cap, and it has a lot of buttons and pins on it. I'm familiar with 4-H in Nevada today, and I don't think they have this.

Well, to me that is a sad thing because their little hat meant a great deal. They wore it to all their meetings; it was part of their uniform, and they had the little uniform and the little band on their sleeve to tell which club they belonged to. But each year as they achieved, why, they were given these pins, and they put them on their little cap. I tell you, they were most important. That was quite a thing in this area. [The cap is still part of the 4-H uniform in Lassen County.]

I can see that, with all the awards on that one. Would you have become involved if your children had not been involved, do you think?

I truthfully don't know. I took sewing when I was in high school, and I used it until I had the children. In training—that was the Depression, too—all the nurses made their own clothes. And we'd make things over. Our mother would send us an old coat, and we'd make a coat for school and this and that. I knew I had used it.

You mentioned that your daughter became involved in Make It Yourself With Wool.

Yes. I was well along in 4-H, and, of course, I brought the children to Reno quite often to show them what our children had made for 4-H. Then I got acquainted with the ladies here that were involved in the wool program. They wanted to know if Lassen wouldn't be interested in the Make It Yourself With Wool. So we started a group up there—a Make It Yourself With Wool—and we competed in California. Several of the Lassen girls went to state finals, and I just couldn't tell you how many went on to national finals.

How did your daughter do?

Very well, thank you.

How long were you with Make It Yourself With Wool?

I put on the Make It Yourself With Wool program for 13 years at the Mt. Lassen Hotel. We had a large luncheon; we'd have a fashion show, and the girls would model their own clothes first—the things that they had made—and then they would model for the stores. While the program was on, why, I don't know just exactly how long—2 weeks afterwards or something—the stores would give a discount for anything that they had purchased from seeing it at the show. It lasted all afternoon. We'd have lunch about 12:30, and many times it went on till 4:00. People were very much interested.

Did any ever go on to the national contest?

Yes, yes. My daughter did and, oh,. a girl from Milford and, oh, several. Arlene Stoy went on to national.

When your daughter went, did you go with her?

No, they have a leader from here in the wool bureau [Wool Growers Auxiliary of the Nevada Wool Growers], and they go with them; they're chaperones.

I bet that made you quite proud, though, to see not only your daughter, but to see your students....

I think one of the biggest thrills I had was when she beat the Neddenriep girl from Gardnerville out because they had a leader that was a wonderful leader, just wonderful. This girl had made a costume, and they had the contest up at the university [University of Nevada]. They debated quite a little bit of time over whose costume they would send to state, and they finally ended up sending Krestine. I was just thrilled to death, of course.

Do you remember the Neddenriep girl's name by any chance?

No, I don't.

Would that have been one of Lena's daughters?

It could be.

Did you deal very much with the county extension agent, and, if so, what was the relationship that you and your husband had with that person?

Yes. The county extension agent was an elderly man by the name of Stan Brown, and he would come down and help us get the group together and tell them the responsibilities of taking care of animals, and he would also bring down an extension lady to help us plan what we were going to sew and what the children were going to sew for the next year. And my husband and him would go out and look at the hay and so on and so forth, or what the kids were going to sow for their sheep—my husband took all the sheep and cattle from the southern end of the county to Susanville at the fair time. We had a very close relationship; he was a wonderful man, and he sent in the reports to Berkeley.

When you had this meeting with him, were the parents of other children there, too?

Oh, yes. As many as we could get together.

Did Mr. Brown go out and visit any of the other ranches, or did he just come down that one time?

No, he would stop and see the ranchers—Mr. Rolland and the ranchers that desired him, why, he would go by and help them, too.

Did you work with Mr. Brown other than for 4-H, like if you were having a problem? Or if other ranchers were having some kind of a problem, would they contact the extension office to see if the extension office had an answer to the problem?

Oh, many times. Two or 3 years, not running together, but 2 or 3 different times, why, they had problems with the cows sluffing the calves before calving time. Stan would always come down and take specimens and send them into Berkeley—sometimes take them into Berkeley—and then come down and tell them to get them on certain feed or off certain feed and so on. He was very good help to all the ranchers.

What were the particular problems, the reason cows were aborting their calves?

Well, usually feed.

Really? What kind of thing would cause that?

Well, one year they had them up in Last Chance—the Rollands and the Harwoods and... oh, what was that schoolteacher's name?

And another gentleman.They had lost a lot of calves up there. We lost a few but nothing like they did. But they came up with the fact that it was too many pine needles and not enough other roughage. They were feeding them hay, but their roughage was all pine needles.

This was from their own forage up there?

Yes, from their own forage in the low hills there in...from Last Chance.It caused, evidently, an acid condition or something and would cause them to abort.

Was this at a certain time in the gestation period, or could this happen anytime along in that?

No, it happened not too long before they had their calves.

So it was almost full-term?

Yes.

That's quite a time to go that long and then get a loss.

Yes.

You mentioned when Larry went to school, he became involved with bees with a professor at Davis. Did your children go to school out of state, out of Reno?

Yes. We went up to the University of Nevada when Krestine was ready to go to college, and they didn't have electric sewing machines. She wanted to get into some school that would show her the finer things—or more modern things—and so she went to Davis. Our ranch was located in Nevada and California, and so she was able to go to Davis without paying out-of-state tuition. She went down to Davis and continued with her sewing and her fashion designing, and she's made a living with fashion designing and now has written a book, Ultrasuede Sewing.

What is her married name?

Her married name is Corbin.

You must be very proud of her.

Oh, yes! Like most mothers. [laughter]

Larry decided to go to Davis, also?

Yes. That was quite the thing up in Lassen County. They took quite a few from Reno, but nothing like Lassen.

At the time, what's now the University of Nevada, Reno had an agricultural school....

But they didn't pay much attention to home economics.

That's why your daughter went to Davis?

Yes.

In Larry's case, why did he choose Davis over the University of Nevada?

He went up to Susanville—Lassen County—his junior-senior year in high school. Being a ranch boy—and there were more ranch children up there—he wanted to go up there. They couldn't stay at home and go to high school. They had transportation, but it

worried us, in the winter when the snows were on and everything. So he stayed with Nate and Jessie Holme's family in Susanville during the week, and then he would come home weekends. He was forever getting stopped—I wouldn't say getting ticketed because they didn't, then—but he was getting stopped for part of the time having too many children in the car and going around blocks and all. They didn't allow them to drag main street at that time. It seemed like every Monday morning I had to go up for one reason or another about the car. He started to tell the judge one time what time he left. He was practicing football at the time, and he said, "Lots of times I don't leave high school until a quarter to seven.

The judge said, "Don't tell me what time you leave." The judge said, "You don't need to tell me what time you leave because I can hear you leave." Larry had taken steel wool and put up the exhaust pipes so they could make a lot of noise on main street! [laughter]

So then he decided to go to Davis?

So he decided to go to Davis. He went to Davis 2 years. Our daughter was achieving in Davis. She was princess at the May Day parade or whatever it is they have— Achievement Day. She was getting practically straight A's in her subjects, because she just loved every one of them. He said he was not known as Larry Dickinson. No one knew him as Larry Dickinson; he was Krestine's brother—"Oh, you're Krestine's brother." He wanted to identify himself as Larry.

So he stopped up there and went to San Jose State. He went one year and started the second year when my husband had a problem with kidney stones and was very, very ill. So he quit down there and came home, and, of course, he could commute to Reno, so he stayed and finished at Reno, Nevada.

What degree did he get?

Engineering. He was not interested in the cattle at all. I always blamed it onto my husband. When he was a small child, my husband would tell him to change the oil in the truck—"There's this or that wrong with truck; you fix it. You do this; you do that." And he started just to develop machinery, and he just loved it.

He invented a piece of machinery, a hay loader.

Yes, he did. Now, my husband can tell you more what he did and who he sold it to and all. I'd rather have Dick tell you because he knows more about machinery.

From my reading, it picked up hay in the field and stacked it.

Picked up hay in the field and stacked it. Then he would go back and retrieve it out of the stack. He took my motor from my vacuum cleaner, to cut the wires. He would sit in the cab and cut the wires and feed it out a flake at a time.

You were telling me about how he wanted to sit in the cab, so wouldn't have to get out....

Yes, out in a snowstorm! [laughter]

One of his teachers had something to say about that.

Oh, that was in grade school; that was in arithmetic. Larry was always very good in arithmetic. Mrs. Cloak gave him a failing grade. So I went down to school, of course, to see her, and she said, yes, she had to give him a failing grade because she had to wake him up. She said, "I've got to wake Larry up." She

said, "I will give him 12 problems to do in 30 minutes, and he will spend 15 minutes trying to figure out an easier way to do them. So then he's only got 15 minutes to do all 12 problems, and consequently, he doesn't get finished." So she said, "I had to give him a failing grade to get him to work."

Just to get him on track.

On track. But she said, "You'll never have to worry about Larry because he's going to figure out an easier way to do something." And that's really the way he made his living till the day he died.

I'm just impressed that I'm sitting this close to the mother of the inventor of that hay loader.

No, that was just in him. He was trying to figure out an easier way where he wouldn't get wet and cold! [laughter]

Can you describe how you stored hay on the ranch, or what kind of silo did you have?

Well, we didn't have a regular silo on our ranch. They did have down by Standish and down by Milford. They had what I would call underground. They'd dug this huge pit and put their feed and so on and molasses and things in that, and then it would ferment. Months later, they would feed it all winter to the cattle. It was very easy to feed; they could feed that even in terrible wind weather, and it was more nourishing because they had added the molasses. It fermented, and they could use, oh, the stems and stalks of the alfalfa and the wild grass hay... just bring it in in the truckload and dump it in.

Well, I know they've gone to the ground silos back in the Midwest, too.

Oh, have they? I know I asked them one time would it freeze, and they laughed at me because it makes heat instead of freezing!

It would, yes!

I said, "You don't put it up in the silo because it'll freeze?" They got quite a kick out of me being so green!

They didn't have surface silos, then?

No, they didn't have any around here at that time.

Do you know why they might not have?

Well, I always felt because of the wind and the hard winters.. .I don't know exactly.

That makes sense here in Nevada.

Yes, and then it fermented better underground, too.

To back up a bit, when you first came to the ranch in 1931, you did not have electricity out there.

No, we didn't.

When did you get electricity at Red Rock?

Let's see...in 1954, I believe. We had applied for electricity just before the war. They were going to start on our line, oh, in a couple of weeks. Then, of course, when the war broke out, they couldn't. So we were one of the first after the war. They just serviced the people that they had taken lines into, but they had so many miles to come in; they came in from Long Valley.

In the meantime, we had put up poles and things for a telephone, too, quite a little bit.

At that time we were only on long distance. When they came in, why, then we changed the wires. We had purchased the wire from Herlong; it had been used.

So you had the poles, then; you had telephone service at this time?Strictly long distance, though.

Yes, strictly long distance.

But when the power came in, you put....

Then they put in poles. They put in much sturdier poles and better.You see, it had to be. Then we got permission from the Rural Electrification [Association] to put our wires on the electrical poles.

What changes did electricity make on the ranch? Was it something to get adjusted to?

[laughter] No! I don't think you had to adjust to any of the wonderful, modern things! We were just thrilled to death, of course.

The main thing, I think, that I hadn't even had a chance to use, as local people did, was a vacuum cleaner, because we did have an ice box. Every time we'd come to town, however, the back end of the car had to be filled with ice to take back to the ice box. But we did have a cooling. But, of course, as soon as we got electricity and had the refrigerator...now I've changed that way a great deal, keeping meat and....

But you as a woman and a housekeeper really noticed the vacuum cleaner?

Oh, terribly so.

Did you have a lot of carpeting then or more like throw rugs and things?

Yes. Well, we had throw rugs, too, but we had carpeting in the living room and the bedrooms, for warmth. We did it more for warmth, I think, than for looks.

Was it wall-to-wall carpeting?

Wall-to-wall carpeting, yes.

Speaking about the house, did you have a parlor or a sitting room in your house that you kept closed off?

No. Now, my husband's mother did, but I never had that because I had the children, and we had remodeled his grandparents' home. Mr. O. C. Dickinson.. .I think it was 1915 when his parents come from the Winnemucca ranch, and he built them a home down by another spring; it was approximately 2 miles from the main house. When we were married in 1931, it was just as the banks closed. We were married in April, and the banks closed in May. We didn't know what we were going to do for a home other than to move their home up, and an elderly man by the name of Bevilacqua in Reno came out and moved it up. It was so heavy and so well built that he had to fix a deadman to pull the house with...

What's a deadman?

I don't know exactly, but just like they hold up a fence on the corners, and they fix this deadman to hold it to. They would fix the deadman, and then they'd pull the house up that far, and then they'd fix another deadman because the horses couldn't pull it through the sand, it was so heavy.

Like winching it?

Yes, winching it. Same thing as winching.

Did you, as the Dickinson family, have any customs—holiday customs or family customs—that you maintained, such as Christmas? Do you have anything that was family tradition or unique? Anything Danish heritage, seeing as how Mr. Dickinson's family was Danish?

We had something that was a little different than most people do now, I think. Each one in the group of our age at that time, we would all get together. There was about, I would imagine, 10, 12 couples, because we included Milford and Janesville, Doyle....

Where is Janesville?

Janesville is a little further north than Malford. And we'd all get together and have kind of a potluck dinner, oh, every 2, 3 months—I'd say every couple of months—and all get together and play cards. Well, sometimes we'd play cards, and then if it got close to 4:00 in the morning, well, we'd have breakfast, because they had chores to go home to. So we'd have breakfast, and then they'd go on home.

Send them on their way.

[laughter]

But as a family, you didn't have anything that you consider special or unique as traditions?

Not any set date that I know of. We observed birthdays and Christmas. And Larry, as a small child, oh, he just hated to see his aunt and uncle come out from Reno for Christmas because when they would arrive, why, I'd have dinner all ready, of course, and we'd eat and then open the presents for the children. They were the only 2 small children in the entire family, so they got an abundance at Christmastime. He said, "I hope Aunt Dooley and Uncle Mike don't come tonight." "Larry, don't talk like that!"

He said, "Well, they always meet Santa Claus down in the canyon, and he never gets to come to the house! I've never seen Santa Claus because they always meet him down in the canyon.

That's a really unique way to keep Santa going.

Yes. He believed in Santa Claus for a long, long time, too.

I can believe that! [laughter]

Yes.

Outside of holidays and birthdays and things like that, what did you do for entertainment on the ranch? Go back to when you moved out there in the thirties, maybe, and bring it up—any changes and things?

Well, we went to Portola a great deal to dances, even after the children arrived. We'd fix a bed in the back of the car—raise up the back and fix them a bed—and go in and dance. Every half hour, every hour, I'd go out and see that they were OK. The only thing, it was kind of hard on Krestine, because I'd go out to see how they were getting along, and she'd tell me her brother was cold. But they enjoyed it, too.

Where were the dances in Portola?

Oh, at the Legion Hall, I believe.

Were they set schedules?

Yes, I think they had one a month or something.

Who played for the dances?

It was a potluck dinner, and they would get the local players. I really couldn't answer that because I didn't know the players.

Did you ever have big name bands come in at the time?

No, no. They couldn't afford that.

When you were borne on the ranch, say, in the evenings, what did you do for entertainment?

Oh, we played cards a lot with the hired man and with Dick's mother and father.

What kinds of games? Do you remember?

Most any of the card games.

After Krestine and Larry were there, did that change your evening entertainment as they were growing up?

Not a great deal, no. We still played the cards. Of course, after we had the teachers—the teachers stayed there—a lot of times we'd go up to the other house, and the kids would stay down at our home, and we'd go up to the folks' place.

Did you have a television on the ranch?

We had a radio on the ranch until we got electricity. Then right away we got television. But we had just the radio before that. We really enjoyed our radio, and I tell you, it was a godsend because you could hear the news all winter.

Kind of kept you in touch when you were isolated.

Oh, yes.

Did you ever <u>feel</u> isolated out there?

No, I didn't. I had classmates that would come out there. They thought that I was going to be lonesome and this and that and so on. But after they were there and we were busy and they entered into the things that we were doing, "Well, I didn't know that it would be like this," they would say.

The vastness of the land.. I know a lot of people who are uncomfortable here because of the wide spaces and..

Oh, they are, yes.

But you never felt anything like that?

No. Later on in years I had a German girl that came out there and stayed. She couldn't speak any English, and I couldn't speak any German, so we had a little dictionary on the counter—translating words from German to English. If she couldn't think of an English word, well, she'd look it up in German, and then it would tell her the English word. And the same for me. I would look it up in English and show it to her in German. She took pictures of the ranch and sent them home. One of her friends wrote and told her not to send any more pictures and not to talk too much about the ranch because, " They're all calling you a liar; there isn't such a place. They don't know where you get the pictures or just what it relates to, but they <u>know</u> that there isn't a place like that." Even though she was <u>in</u> the pictures. She was about 17, 18.

How did she come to stay with you?

Well, she came across from Germany. Her mother had a timed visa, but she had a permanent visa. She wanted to definitely learn English. She had taken it in school in Germany, but she had never used the English language, really, to put paragraphs together or sentences together and make sense out of them. When they landed in New York, where they went into the restaurant, she told her mother, why, she could speak English, and everybody laughed. Everyone looked up and laughed at the way she used the English. So when she got out here, why, her brother-in-law told me, he said, "I don't know what we're going to do; she's just melancholy and blue and wants to go back to Germany, and it's just because she doesn't know how to speak English."

Why did she come here to Reno?

Because she had a brother-in-law and sister here. So I said, "Well, why don't you bring her out to the ranch for 3, 4 months." I've forgotten now just what I was going to do or planning on doing; maybe I was in Farm Bureau at that time and traveling quite a little bit. I said, "I can't speak German, and she'll have to speak English." She has told us many times that was the best thing she ever did in her life.

One time I left and went on a Farm Bureau trip. My son was just about her age—a little bit older, Larry was. She came out the first morning, and she wanted to know if they wanted "quiet eggs." My husband said, "What in the devil are quiet eggs?"

She said, well,she'd cook them; she'd show them. So she soft boiled them,and they were quiet eggs because they were soft. She thought "soft" was "quiet."

Are you still in touch with this lady?

Oh, yes. She lives in San Jose. She and her husband have an electrical business. We see her about once a year; she comes up to visit her sister and brother-in-law.

What is her name?

Karen [Engelbaur (nee Moessner)].

How did you know the brother-in-law and the sister?

He was the head man at the Holiday Hotel for years and years. In fact, I think he worked at Harolds Club first for years. He went from there to work for Newt Crumley at the Holiday, and we had known him. He was a great hunter and a great hiker, and he'd come out there hunting and hiking. He was married before we ever got acquainted with him, but after he was married and had his children,why, he'd bring them out, even before they could walk where he wanted to go. He'd leave them there at the place to play.

What was his name?

His name was Ernie Fuchs.

Is he still alive?

Yes, he is, and he's working at MGM. I think he's one of the head maitre d's or something.

Now, Karen came out from Germany. You had other foreign people come stay at the ranch, didn't you? I remember reading a newspaper article about it.

We had boys from Chile—an exchange.

How did you get involved with that?

They weren't exactly exchange students; they come through Farm Bureau, and they wanted to learn our methods of handling cattle. We have one boy that's written up quite a little bit. When my husband first took him outside, why, he wasn't going to do anything; he just stood there. So my husband told him, he said, "Now, you do it."

"Oh, no," he said, "I'm just here to observe."

My husband said, "No, you're here to learn. How are you going to show them back home if you haven't done it?"

After he returned home, he wrote, "I never dreamed I would learn so much." They were with us 3 months at a time; we had 4 boys.

When did you start doing that?

About 1945, I guess.

After the war?

Oh, yes, after the war. I guess Farm Bureau paid their way here, and then we had to pay them so much a month. They would accumulate that for their return home ticket. But they were from wealthy families because no one in Chile owned any land unless they were very, very wealthy. So they were from wealthy families, and they didn't...they had been taught to ride, period.

But not work.

But not work.

Did you have problems with that?

No. My husband handled it very well. This one boy, when he first come there, he told my husband that he did not like him—come right out and told him. I asked him, I said, "What seems to be wrong? Is he working you too hard? Or do you want me to notify Farm Bureau or something?" We could report if they weren't happy.

"No, no," he said. "It's just the way he treats you."

I said, "What do you mean, treat me?"

"Well, he makes you work. My mother doesn't work. She has someone in the kitchen; she has someone to take care of the chicken—the fowls," he called them. She had someone to take care of the fowls and someone to do all of her work, and I had to work.

So Mr. Dickinson was pretty mean to you?

So he was mean. Yes, he wasn't the right kind of a husband—at all.

That's an interesting comment because often we don't look at other cultures like that.

Another thing that was really interesting—he had never seen any velvet.When he returned home, he was going to be married. He had me...I went with him, and we purchased a lot of velvet for her wedding gown. Oh, he was just fascinated with that soft, smooth material for a white wedding gown.

How old were these fellows when they'd come?

I imagine 22, 23.

You had 4 of them, you say?

Yes, we had one every 3 months.

Do you still keep in touch with any of them?

No, we haven't after they had that civil problem down there. We went down. We

saw him when we went to South America; we stopped by to see him. He was on his uncle's property at the time, and he said that they had divided his father's property all up. It went into, I guess, similar to communism—they gave everybody 5 acres or what they felt... because they were close to a town, too.

Did his having come to the United States pose any problems for him, do you know?

Yes, I think it did a little because he wasn't satisfied with their dividing everything up. He knew that we had large places and everything was freedom. We could go to Denver if we wanted to, or to Chicago, and they were very limited. Of course, Chile is a long, narrow country, and there isn't too many places to go, unless they get out of the country, and they weren't allowed to go out of the country.

Yes. I want to ask you some questions now about some food sources. I know we've talked about your garden and everything, and at the time I didn't think to ask you, but did you ever use any natural foods? Did you gather berries and nuts and things?

There are no berries in our part of Nevada, and there's no nuts.

No pine nuts?

No. Sometimes we'd go down by Carson or around here in the foothills of Virginia City and get pine nuts. But we didn't get them to use; we just got them, oh, to serve nuts once in a while.

On the Red Rock ranch, up through that country, you don't have any pinyon trees up there.

No—juniper trees.

Do you know why that is, why there aren't any pinyons?

No, I couldn't tell you. But there's other parts of Nevada that doesn't have any pinyon trees, even down close to Carson.

Yes, they're in certain areas.

But the Indians would come out there in the spring, just about Decoration time [Memorial Day], and, oh, in burlap bags they'd probably bring us 4 or 5 bags—70 pounds—of pinyon nuts.

Why would they be coming out?

They'd come out to gather wild flowers for graves. We had a lot of wild flowers out there. We'd have them in for a few meals, or I'd fix a large casserole. We also had a—and we'll have to ask my husband what they call them; they have them here and some of the ranches where it's quite wet—we had a blue flower that came from a bulb out there in the meadow in the spring.

It's a type of iris, isn't it?

No, it wasn't a type of iris, but it did have a bulb. I can't tell you the name of it. But it grew about, oh, 6 inches or 8 inches high, and they would come out and dig those bulbs, and then they dried them and mashed them like flour, almost. They seemingly liked them very much in their pancakes.

It's not a sego lily?

I don't know. [The flower is the blue camas.]

Where were these Indians from? Were they Paiute or Washoe or both?

They come mostly from around by Standish, and there'd be some from Reno, too.

But they'd come out to the ranch specifically to pick the flowers?

Yes, and a lot of times they'd camp and stay a couple of weeks. We never bothered them, and they never bothered us. They'd been doing it for years. They did it all after Grandad took up the ranch, and they continued to do so.

You didn't have many fences on the ranch from what you told me, and I know today that wild horses are a big....

Nuisance. [laughter]

Yes. There's pros and cons both ways. Did you have many problems on the Red Rock ranch with wild horses?

No, they were just beginning then, really. Just starting to be a big problem.

But are they <u>really</u> the problem?

Oh, yes, very much so. You see, the entire rangeland is serviced by wells and windmills. If the wind isn't blowing and the wild horses come.... The cattle will wait around there and then go out and feed at night, and then come back to the water troughs. There's nearly always a little breeze that'll bring in <u>some</u> water. But when the horses come down, if there isn't ample water, they turn around and kick the troughs. They'll just demolish troughs overnight. If there're 6 or 8 or 10 or 12 horses, why, they can just demolish 3, 4 watering troughs in a night.

Could you explain, please, the system of windmills and troughs? You say out on the range they had the windmills and the watering troughs. It wasn't just springs, that the cattle went naturally to the springs?

Many times we'd have water troughs by the spring and then pipe it into the watering troughs from the spring. But if there wasn't, we dug wells. They had men from Reno that would come out and help dig the wells. To my knowledge, Mr. Dickinson didn't drill the wells himself. We had a well driller.

Do you know when that started, the wells and the windmills?

They were there when I arrived.

So horses <u>were</u> a problem, as far as watering and things. Are horses a big problem in destroying the range?

Yes. Yes, they do the same thing. If they're short on grass, they will paw it out, where a cow won't.

So destroy it altogether, then?

Yes, they take it out by root, you see.

So back in the 1930s the wild horse population was just starting to be a problem.

Yes, it was a nuisance to us. We'd have to put big timbers.... We cut the juniper trees and made a good foundation for the troughs—a good, strong one. We never left them unprotected. Then we'd buy the watering

troughs and put in there and then put the logs, as I called them, around them.

OK. Other predators that are often argued as being pro or con on the range and to ranchers are coyotes and eagles.

We were not bothered with either one to a great extent. We had some coyotes, but we rarely saw an eagle.

Well, you weren't running sheep either.

No.

Are coyotes and eagles really the problem for the sheepmen?

Oh, yes, definitely, especially down by Smith Valley and out in that area.We knew the Fulstones very well—Fred Fulstone that was down there. We knew the entire family, and we visited back and forth about once or twice a year.

Was that Dr. Mary's...?

That's Dr. Mary's family. Fred was her husband.

He just passed away recently, right around Christmas.

Yes, just passed away. She's still living. We went down for the funeral and all. But young Freddy, as we call him, has had a great deal of problems with coyotes and eagles both.

You knew Mary Fulstone, and she's a doctor. Did you and she do a lot of medical talking when you were together? Did you have a lot in common that way?

Well, we got acquainted with them through hunting, really. My husband was invited out there with someone else. Of course, he was on the Grazing Board—the Virginia City Grazing Board—and so he knew all the ranchers. I guess old Fred was on the Grazing Board with him, too. They got acquainted, and then Dick had a problem; I couldn't tell you what. He wanted to go down and see him and talk things over between meetings, and I got acquainted with Dr. Mary that way. Of course, we'd talk medicine when we got together and she had a day off. We'd usually write Freddy or her and tell them to drop us a card if it was not OK—if they were going to be busy—and then we'd go down. We always spent the day.

Larry was a very active little boy, but he was not malicious. He would take his gun and shoot at rabbits, badgers and so on. Her children were just about teenagers—l8 up—at the time we took Larry down as a little fellow; he was very affectionate when he was quite small. She'd always say, "Do I have some loving?" That meant loving. [laughter] So Larry would love her, and then he'd go hunting on the ranch there for rabbits and stuff.

Dr. Mary is highly thought of today, I know, in Smith Valley.

Oh, yes.

Did she have much trouble, being a woman doctor, do you know?

She came out there as a bride; I don't know just what year, but during the Depression in 1931—they were married years before Dick and I—and she wasn't going to practice medicine.

She had her medical degree, then, when she was....

Yes, when she married Fred.

Do you know where she came from?

No, I don't. I guess I did know, but I don't at the present time. But anyway, she was not going to practice. Then when the Depression hit, why, Fred, Sr., had quite a time meeting bills and this and that. She had different people come to her home and ask her about doing this and doing that; they didn't have time to come to Reno, or someone was too ill to be moved to Reno. She did her beginning of medicine more or less like I did my nursing out in the northern part here, because different ones would come by and say, "Gosh, Judie, what would you do for this?" And, well, they did with her as a doctor, and in no time at all, why, she started business—I mean seriously. If there was something she couldn't handle, or if she felt they needed surgery—they didn't have the facilities there in Smith Valley—she would send them to Reno. So she got acquainted with all the doctors.

Each fall they would have a big meeting. All the doctors that she sent patients to would come out and go pheasant hunting. My husband was included, due to the fact of the cattle and all. We would never attend the medical meeting, but we would be there for the day. She had Indians and help in to cook the dinner; it was all served buffet. Oh, I guess, lots of times she'd have 100 people.

Were pheasants native in that part?

Yes. They had pheasants until—I can't recall exactly the year, but it hasn't been too many years—about 1960, probably 1970, why, they had the disease in the pheasants out there. They brought in some other pheasants; they didn't think they had enough—they didn't have a real big hatch that year. So they brought in pheasants, and they brought whatever it is they had, and just killed them all. In fact, they're just coming back now.

They've restarted them in the last few years. Mr. Dickinson was on the Virginia City Grazing Board?

Yes.

Why Virginia City Grazing Board?

I don't know, but it took in all of our area. He could tell you how much area it took in. They would have state meetings, too. He knew the managers from all over the state. That was after the Taylor Grazing Act went in, and then they put in this Grazing Board so that the ranchers would have personal representation. My husband served on that board, I don't know...18, 20 years. His father was on it first, and then he was put on.

OK. Were there any hot springs up on the Red Rock ranch?

No, but just below the Red Rock ranch there's a hot spring by Western Pacific railroad, with mineral water, right under the trestle.

I know it's been a popular place for people to go and soak in now, and the one out at Beckwourth, California, and then there's one at Sierraville.

[There is) a real large one at Standish in California...very strong in minerals.Bums and men looking for work between Alturas, Susanville and Reno would stop at the

Standish hot springs—between Litchfield and Standish—take a bath and wash their clothes. Mrs. Esther McClelland told me several times men would come close to the house—out by the barn and such—and call and call till someone heard them. All they would have on or around them were rags—they had taken a bath in the springs, put their clothes on the brush to dry, and when they picked them up they would fall to pieces. The mineral had practically eaten up the fibers. Esther got a big kick out of it. They would want clothing. She said there would be one or 2 every year, and one year in the early 1940s there was a group of 4, 5, 6 men all begging for clothes—practically naked.

Did the ranch families, when you were at the ranch, or what you know about before you came there in 1930s, did they ever use the hot springs?

Oh, a lot, for rheumatism, especially. Elderly people used it, mostly.

The one at Beckwourth and the one under the railroad tracks up near Doyle never were developed.

No.

Did they use those springs?

Yes.

What about the one at Sierraville—Campbells Hot Springs?

I don't know if they used it much or not.

That would be a much longer way to go.

Yes. Oh, 50 miles or more, I guess.

But you did use them?

Yes, they did use them a lot.

I just was at Constantia this weekend.

Oh, were you?

It's really a pretty place. The church is still standing there. Now, what was Constantia again?

Well, Constantia was just a big ranch to begin with. They had a country store there for quite...it was there in 1931 when I went out there. A family by the name of Ross was prominent there years before my time. The 2 Ross girls I have in many of the old, old pictures.

Are they related to the Ross family of Reno?

No, they're not. They came from down in California someplace to begin with. They had money, and they built what we called the big White House. They had a stairway on each side of the living room that went up and then had a landing at the top. My daughter, when she was real small, she was always going to be married in the White House.She called it the White.. .well, everyone called it the White House. Then after they built the church, very few people used it. Of course, it was small.

The church?

Yes, but it was hard, I guess, for the priest to get out. Later, they used it somewhat for non-Catholic people.

It was a Catholic church, originally?

Yes, originally. Then they used it just for a family church.

The White House isn't standing any longer, is it?

No. And that was sad.

As you're facing the church, that was off to the right of the church, was it?

No, to the left. Well, if you were facing east—the house and the church face east—then the house would be to the north. They had this large spring that came down off the mountain, and they had a pool there. Oh, it was really fixed nice.

Well, the foundations for the house are still there. There're massive stone foundations that you can see, and the church is still there, and it looks like maybe a little shed building in behind the church. It's just a beautiful place.

Yes, it was, and they kept up the yard so beautiful for years.

You can see the evidence of that up toward the spring. So that wasn't a town of any size?

No, no, just the one store. My husband used to tell the story about a guy that owned it. He was leaving for a couple of weeks on a vacation, and he had a man to take care of the store while he was gone. He said, "Now, I tell you," he said, "if Charlie comes in here," he said, "give him anything he wants because if you don't give it to him, he'll steal it when you're not looking. Really watch him, but," he said, "anything he wants, just give it to him."

Do you know if there's a cemetery there?

Yes, there was a cemetery there. I think it was south of the church, right up against the hill. But there's several buried there.

Would this be just Ross family or people from the area, since there was a church there?

I really couldn't tell you because there was no one buried there after my time. Dick said when he was a boy there were at least 20 graves there.

Do you remember when the Ross family left or what created Constantia, what made it become a ghost...?

No, you can ask my husband that because he knows more about that than I do.

Well, it's a beautiful little place.

I know that Grandma Petersen and her family went down there when they were younger and would visit with the Ross girls. But to my knowledge, they didn't come back to live there after I was there.

Were they there when you were there, when you moved there?

Well, I'd heard of them being back. They didn't live there, no. They would visit Dick's mom one day each year—she'd give a luncheon for several ladies.

Was anybody living there in 1930?

No, the Galeppis bought it. When they bought the Constantia ranch, they bought the White House, also. It evidently was the one that had the water right because it come right out of the mountain there.

Do you know why the name Constantia was put on the place?

I don't know. That was before my time, too.

Did you and Mr. Dickinson know Wilbur May of the Double Diamond ranch?

Yes, we did.

What can you tell me about Wilbur May?

Well, I didn't know him socially or anything.He always seemed to be very reserved, whenever we met him. I didn't know about his business enterprises much, other than the Wilbur May's ranch.

Is that what they called it at first?

Yes.

When did it change to the Double Diamond?

I don't know. But all the cattle that he bought were purchased for Wilbur May's ranch.

Do you know who had that ranch before he bought it?

No, I don't know. That's another thing that Dick might know. There was quite a group of men—he said it was a political group affair—and they owned half the valley over there.

And then Mr. May bought the ranch from them?

Yes.

Do you know anything about Mr. May's background— when he came in or why he came to Nevada?

No. Now, maybe Dick would know that, too.

We know that his family money came out of Missouri, and in asking around to other ranchers in the area, I've gotten the idea that a real hard-core, lifelong rancher didn't respect this man too much; I get the idea he was maybe a gentleman rancher, if that would be a term for it?

[laughter] Yes, that would be right. He was that type. He gave you the idea that because you were western, he was better than you were, or that's the impression he gave me.

Did you ever interact...?

He didn't have time for western chitchat.

Did you feel that Mr. May attempted to fit into the ranch community, as it is?

Never tried to. He was always aloof.I felt he was quite cold, that way. He was a good man, as far as I knew. He was a good man; to my knowledge, he didn't do things that were wrong, but he was always aloof of our western chitchat.

When you say chitchat....

Well, talking about the cattle and the dry years and the wet years and getting together and....

Just to share ideas and to share techniques and progress and the new things that are out?

Yes. That's right.

Did he take advice well, or if something went wrong, did he seek advice at all?

I don't know. I don't know because I never tried to....

Did you know his wife at all?

No. I just met him at cattle meetings [Nevada Cattlemens Association] and stuff, occasionally.

Did he fit in very well with the other ranchers at cattle meetings?

Well, as I say, he wasn't a communicator.

But he did go to the cattle association meetings, that kind of thing?

Oh, yes. He went to several meetings. It was [Nevada] Cattlemens Association, state meeting. The Callahan boy that worked at Hilp's Drugstore.. .Dick knew old Phil Callahan.

I have done an interview with Harry Callahan. He's Phil's son and has owned the Callahan ranch and has run it since the father died. Do you know Harry at all?

No, I don't know him.

What about Phil Callahan? Do you have any impressions of him, what kind of rancher he was?

You mean the old father? I never even remember meeting him, but Dick had quite a bit of dealings with him.

OK, I'll have to talk to him about that sometime.

Bud Holcomb had the ranch before Mays. They owned the whole area—-Holcomb ranch was a huge thing. I remember [Bud] Holcomb.

What can you tell me about him? Holcomb Lane's named after him, is it not?

Yes. He'd been in the area for years.

Had the family ranched there or...?

I don't know, now.

What about the Matley family? Did you know the Matley' s?

Very well. Dick says be careful what you...he said you'll get yourself in bad with Matleys. [laughter] But they used to graze on us. Old John Matley—the old father— was a sheepherder over in Sierra Valley. There was—was it Settelmeyer?I can't tell you—a real old family that had a large holding over there. Old man Matley went over there as a sheepherder. He wasn't over there so terribly long till he married this only daughter. Everyone in the valley just about erupted, I guess, at that time. She was approximately the age of my husband's mother Hattie. They were young girls together; she remembered her. She [Hattie] said that she was the most beautiful girl in the entire area without a doubt, and then she married this non-good looking Italian man, and his name was Matilini. When he came to Reno and they started up the ranch here on the meadows [Truckee Meadows], he changed his name to Matley.

They had... I don't know what the oldest boy's name was...they had 4 boys and the one girl. The oldest boy left the ranch when he was a young man, and the other boys stayed at the ranch. There was Clifford and Johnny and Marshall, and Elizabeth Matley taught in the Glendale schoolhouse that's out here now at the Convention [Center]. It was the first schoolhouse, I guess, on the meadows [Truckee Meadows], and she taught there. She didn't marry for years and years, and then she married a man by the name of Murphy, and they had about 4 children. But when Dick and

I were first married—I think it was the first winter or the second winter that I was ever on the ranch—old Mr. Matley sent the kids up to the Winnemucca ranch to take care of it, and he stayed on the meadows. They had lost some cattle—they had a small place or something in Sierra Valley, and the kids were driving some cattle home. It was a real cold night, so they rode up to our place, and Dick invited them to stay all night. I was about 23 years old, and I imagine they were about, oh, 15, 16, and they stayed all night. That was my first introduction to the Matley ranch.

But they had more cattle than their ranch could accommodate, and so they would go down and drive a great big herd down close to one of our gates or something, open the gate, and let quite a few through, and then shut the gate and stuff. Dick's father and them were fighting all the time over the range. This was before BLM ever came in, before the [Taylor] Grazing Act.

We knew the Matleys for years. Old man Matley used to put up hay here. He had a lot of bronco grass and stuff. And, oh, what'd he call the other—other than bronco—that has the hairs on it?

Oh, foxtails?

Foxtails. He had a lot of foxtail.

What's bronco grass?

Well, bronco grass doesn't grow too high, and the broncos would eat it off in the spring. He would pile it up on the hay. Well, when Frank Evans come in here from the Ball Canyon ranch he would buy hay from old man Matley.I don't know if his name was John or not; I don't think so. Anyway, year after year, he bought this loose-stacked hay. When he'd get down about 3 feet from the ground, why, he'd run into this poor stuff that was terrible. That went on for about 3, 4 years, and so one day, after he'd loaded the last load of hay that he was going to take, why, he set a match to what was left, and old Matley come running out there just having a fit. He told Matley, he says, "I've paid for that hay for 4 years, and I'm not going to buy it again. So I burned it." That was the name he had, agouging everybody, old man Matley did.

They had ranch property here in the valley down about where the airport is now?

And the Winnemucca ranch. The ranch here on the meadows was where they were raised. I don't know if they had one or 2 children when they left the Portola area.

Now John lives....

In Doyle.

How long have they had that property?

They bought that property just about the time we sold out, about 1966 when his family was raised.

Would that have been about when the airport came in down here?

Yes, could have been. Oh, maybe later than that, because it hasn't been over 10 years they bought from Gene Rolland.

Up there at Doyle? That's the old Rolland ranch up there?

Yes, that's the old Rolland ranch. They bought that ranch. But Elizabeth, the sister, chummed with Ruth.. .her father was a professor up and the University of Nevada for

years and years; he died out south of Reno in a rest home.

What did he teach? Do you remember?

No. I could easily find out. Winona Matley married Clifford, and Clifford died just not too long ago. Winona Matley lives here in town. They had a daughter, Judy Matley; she's also married. I think she's a schoolteacher, but I'm not positive on that. I saw them just the other night at the Liberty Bell. Winona's a lovely woman. But anyway, Ruth, every time they would go to anything social, or anything, Ruth would go with Elizabeth. And they'd say, "Oh, you're not married, yet," or something. She'd say, "No, I'm waiting for Johnny."

And Johnny married...what was her name? He married twice. He married a girl and had 2 children, I think; the little boy died of leukemia. Darling little boy, and they called him the Duck. I just loved him; he was just precious. Ruth used to come over to the ranch, and I'd. give her permanents—the old home permanent. But the Duck passed away, anyway. Then I don't know...Ruth must've been right close to 40—between 35 and 40—when she finally married John. The ranch women used to say, "Well, she finally got him." That was quite a saying. But we knew the Matleys very close.

Marshall Matley married a girl from Doyle, and I just loved her. What was her name... [Vernal. But anyway, she finally committed suicide.

You told me that in 1963 Mr. Dickinson became involved with the Riverside Hotel and Casino in Reno.Can you tell me how he got involved in that?

Mr. Jack Sommers came out to the ranch. He had worked for Newt Crumley at the Holiday Hotel. He came out and said that the B men wanted to buy the Riverside Hotel and operate it. My husband told him that he was not interested. Jack Streeter bought into the Riverside as one of the members. Just about the time they were ready to open, why, Jack Streeter no longer wanted to be one of the members. They got into some arguments, and Jack, being an attorney, didn't think that some of the things they wanted to do were too wise or were unwise or something, so he wanted out. So he sent Jack Sommers out again to talk to Dick, and knowing all the men—we knew practically all the men in there; there were going to 8 partnerships—Dick and I bought Jack Streeter out.

Why did they come to Mr. Dickinson to buy in? What was the connection there that they thought he might be interested?

Well, we knew Jack Sommers very well, and we knew Newt Crumley—before he died—for many years. They used to come out to the ranch from the Riverside and go hunting and fishing, and knowing everybody, I guess they.... Of course, they thought it was a good investment, so they wanted him to get into it, too.

Is that something you both discussed together?

Oh, yes. We discussed everything together.

Can you tell me your feelings about getting invested in this and what it would mean—the time involved and all?

Well, at the time, of course, the Riverside was advertised highly as the Riverside Hotel—not just gambling. Dick's aunt, Claire [Dickinson] Knox, that at that time was living

in Flagstaff, Charlie Knox's wife—the man that had committed suicide years and years before—had operated the Riverside when it was known as the Lake Hotel before it was ever called the Riverside. So there was kind of an attachment there—endearment name—and Dick thought, yes, that would be swell; he'd go into it, too.

What happened? Was it a good venture?

No, it was a very bad venture because—I'm quoting now from Mr. Dickinson's standpoint and the way he explained it to me—was the fact that none of the men had ever managed a gambling concern before. They were all self-made men. They had [gaming] rules to go by that were very strict, but each one had a different idea.There was Swift & Company; he [Calvin E. "Red" Swift] was a roofer from up by Gardnerville. There was the man [Richard Fraser] that...furnace company... the largest furnace company maker. Then there was a hotel man [James W. Ensign], and then there was the man [Donald Hall] that was up at Kingsbury Grade. All 8 of them—my husband could spiel off the names of them—but all 8 were self-made men.

But they would not hire a manager that knew gambling, and they did not know—really know—gambling. They thought they could run it—why pay a man $2,500 a month or $5,000 a month when they could do it without that man? My husband felt then and always did feel that had they put in a decent manager, they would have made a go of it.

Did Mr. Dickinson have to get cleared by the Gaming Control Board?

Oh, yes. He was passed by the Gaming Control [Board].

What did he have to do to get cleared by them?

Well, they just go back over your banking, I think, and what you're thought of, if you have records, or if you have this or that, if you always paid your bill and so on and so forth. If you're an admirable person, why, they'd give you a gaming [license].

How long did this venture last for you and Mr. Dickinson? Or is that when it kind of soured for the whole bunch of the fellows?

Well, it soured for all of them at the same time, really...2 1/2 years.

Did you have to put money into this in order to invest?

Yes, we put money up in the beginning when we bought Streeter out. Then they had a reserve, of course. The state gaming required that they have enough in the reserve to pay all of their help, in case they did lose quite a bit of money. They had to pay their help; they had to know that that was on hand. So there was always some in reserve. But if someone come along and won quite a bit of money, then everybody had to come up with the same amount to fill in that loss.

In other words, there was a reserve there, and that always stayed there for employees.

That stayed there.

Then if somebody hit a great big jackpot and what the casino had on hand to pay them wasn't enough, the investors had to make up the difference?

That's right, and besides making up the difference, they had to have some on reserve

to pay in case there was another winner. So it had to be paid ahead of time—up front, in other words.

Can I ask you how much your initial investment was?

I truthfully can't say, but it was around $50,000.

Did you ever get hit with having to pay in more money?

Oh, always. Every once in a while, we had to pay in some more. Of course, then the company would make a little, and then that would go into the reserve, but just about that time, why, something else would happen. During this time that we were in there, Jack Kennedy was assassinated, and that made an awful difference. There were 6 weeks that there was hardly a person come to Reno.

That was right at a bad time of year, too.

Everything closed. That was just at the bad time of the year, and the new highway was supposed to have opened that winter, and it didn't—the new freeway to San Francisco.

Interstate 80.

Yes, and it was late developing or getting done. So the run of people that they expected to be here was not here, and all of it together, with the assassination, why, they just could not make it, that's all. So it went down.

When they got down to the reserve, and they got tired of giving up (putting in more money]—and there were 5 of them that were diehards that just made up their mind they would not give up, whether or no, and there were the 3 that wanted out all the time. Well, for a long time—6 months; they finally closed it.

Did you lose a lot of money in that venture?

Yes, we did.

Do you care to tell me how much or is that too personal?

Yes. [laughter]

All this time, though, you were still ranching the ranch?

That's right. There were a couple of them that used to say, when they'd lose some money—and my husband would hate to come up with some more or said, gosh, he didn't know where he was going to get it—they'd very sarcastically say, "Well, all you have to do is go out to the ranch and kill another steer.

Yes. Some city people don't understand about that. To go back to the Riverside, this was before Jessie Beck?

Yes.

Did she come in right after, then, or...?

No, it was some other person came in before Jessie Beck—a man. Mr. Dickinson could probably tell you, but I can't.

Jessie Beck was the second one, then, after you were involved?

Yes. As I understood it at the time, Jessie Beck was a partner in with Harolds Club. When Harolds Club sold, she owned all the bingo. She did business with old Pappy Smith; there was nothing written. So when Harolds

Club sold, why, the bingo was supposed to be completely hers.

She ran the bingo in Harolds Club, with the understanding that that would be hers, as far as Pappy Smith was concerned. Well, then when it sold, there was quite a bit of difficulty because they claimed that they would not have purchased it had they not thought they were also getting the bingo club. They finally ended up paying her somewhat, but nothing to what Harold would have settled it for. There's no doubt about it that she got bilked there very bad. Right after that, I don't know if it was the following winter or a year or 2 after that, she lost her only grandson up here in the snowslide on Mt. Rose at Slide Mountain. That hurt her very much.

Yes.

Then the men all felt that her son-in-law did not know gaming enough to run the Riverside for her. She was a wonderful woman and very well liked among all the gamblers.

Did you know her?

Yes.

Had you known her before you got involved in the Riverside?

Yes, because she'd been here so many years.

You and Mr. Dickinson made a decision to sell the ranch. When was that?

It started in about 1962 or so—1960. My son had finished school, and he didn't want to come back to the ranch. However, he came back because he knew Dick needed help, and he wouldn't leave. We couldn't get good help—all-round cowhands like it used to be. The last man was there 17 years, and he left when we did. But to get help occasionally, when you needed them, you couldn't get the kind of help we used to be able to get. They'd come out and wouldn't work or didn't know how to do what we wanted done. And my husband was getting older, and knowing that my son didn't want it....

Before this time, when Larry was 16, a woman came out from Reno—a big, buxom woman—and knocked at the door. It was about 4:00 in the afternoon, I guess, and she wanted to know where Mr. Dickinson was. I told her they were riding, and he'd be home about 5:30. She told me that she was a real estate lady, and she came out because she had a client that was very interested in the ranch. I told her that the ranch was not for sale. She said very snooty [laughter]...she said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing," she said. "Anything's for sale for a price, and these people have money."

Do you remember who the woman was?

No, I don't. I heard of her afterwards, though— even after we sold—a few times.
I said, "Well, I don't know; I don't understand."
She said, "Well, I know, without a doubt, that Mr. Dickinson would be interested in selling."
I said, "Well, I have news for you, because it takes 2 signatures in the state of Nevada, and you know that I'm part owner. And until my son knows what he wants to do, this ranch is not for sale."

She stayed, however, and waited and talked to Dick a few minutes, and he said, "Well, have you talked to Judie?"

She said, "Yes."

He said, "Well, what did she tell you?"

She said, "It wasn't for sale."

He said, "Well, then, it's not for sale."

But until we found out if Larry really wanted it....

Yes.

After he was married the first time, he left the ranch and went down by Red Bluff and Sacramento and down in that area. I wanted him to quit ranching altogether and go to New York or somewhere, or Chicago or something, and see if it was something else he wanted to do, and he wouldn't. This was before he was married.

Then when he was married, why, Jan McDonald wanted him to go down to the lower altitude and see what they could find down there, because her mother didn't want her on the ranch. So they went down, and they only stayed about 3, 4 months and came back. Larry said that he worried all the time he was gone about Dad overdoing, because he was getting older. So I said, "Well, if you don't want it—if you want to go into the machinery and all—why, we'll put the ranch up for sale." So Larry and I talked it all over before we ever confronted Dick with it, and he agreed.He said, "I think that's the thing to do." Larry had started on his machinery, and had prospects of building more and so we felt that that was a good time to sell.

So you were pretty practical about it, then.

Yes, both of us were.

Was that a really tough decision for you to make?

Yes, it was—very tough, because it was a change of life, change of friends. All the time that I was on the ranch and the children were younger, I always claimed that if and when we ever left the ranch, we'd go to Susanville, because we were so connected up there with 4-H and Farm Bureau and all. But my husband had gone to school here in Reno, and our business was in Reno. So, we came to Reno.

When you say your business, do you mean your...?

Yes, banking and doctors and friends.

Was it a tough decision, too, for Mr. Dickinson?

Yes. After we left, for months and months, Dick didn't want to go back. Sometimes he had to on business. They kept inviting us to fish or hunt, but he said[there were] too many memories, and he didn't want to see the changes.

Your daughter knew that she didn't want a ranch?

Well, she was down in Sacramento, and her husband didn't know one end of the cow from the other. So they.. .she couldn't. And she was in her sewing. She had her business by that time, too.

When you sold your ranch, one of the people involved in that was Norm Biltz.

That's right. He put the sale together.

Did he approach you, or did you approach him?

We approached him. Mr. Dickinson had had a very bad kidney problem and had surgery, and Larry was in college, and we were in debt because of the Riverside. Not a great deal, but it worried us because we had never been in debt in our lives. All in all

together—and Mr. Dickinson's health—I just felt that that was the time, and I talked him into selling.

So I put out flyers. My son-in-law, Mr. [Lee Delatouri] Corbin, came up, and we wrote up a flyer and sent out about 1,000 copies. Norman Biltz got a copy of it, and the very next morning, why, he came out to the ranch and wanted to know how many of those little flyers I had left. I've forgotten now, but I told him, and he said, "Well, let's burn them, because," he said, "I'll put this thing together for you.

What can you tell me about Mr. Biltz?

Well, he was a very forceful man. He had the money behind him. He was Jacqueline Kennedy's uncle by marriage. A very clean-cut man. You didn't have to have things in writing at all.

In other words, his word was good enough?

His word was good. We thought a great deal of Norman Biltz. He had already put the whole Donner Lake [development] together, and he had financial men behind him. He came out to the ranch, oh, probably 8 times. We tried to talk this over and that over—when we turned out the cattle and what permits we had and how much hay we cut and all the finances of the ranch. We told him just exactly how it was. And he said, "I'll come out. Give me a couple of weeks," he said, "and I think maybe I can put it together for you." I wouldn't say it was over 6 weeks, altogether, till the place was sold.

Did Norm Biltz represent himself, or did he represent a company? If it was a company, do you remember the name?

Well, I imagine they did have a company name, but he represented himself, and then there was Tom Dant. I have the list of the names, also. And he put it all together, enough to run the ranch for one year. So we sold out to him.

My husband moved what cattle he had—we gathered all the cattle, and they were all branded—and turned it over to him.

Did Biltz buy your property intending to ranch it, or did he buy it with the understanding that it would be ranched for one year, and then all or part of it would be developed and sold off as subdivision?

He felt that it would all be sold off as subdivision. The last time he came out to the ranch, he asked my husband.. .he said, "If you want to go back in as one of the buyers, I've got 20 that want in it. But I will limit it to 19, and you can be the twentieth, if you want back in it. And if you do, within 8 years, you will have more out of it than I'm giving you today for it for your share." So we bought back in as one-twentieth.

That was to buy into the company...?

Yes. Red Rock Ranch Estates.

Did that cover the whole ranch property?

Yes.

But they've only developed a very little part of that, is that correct?

Well, they've sold it all off by now.

But not all developed to this point?

No.

And the main push was right there around the meadows?

Around the ranch. Yes. He brought out a manager to manage the ranch, and I believe the man leased the ranch from him until things got organized to sell. But at the southern end of the ranch, they built a real estate office.

It was about 12 years ago or so, when they first started selling off the Rancho Haven Estates [an adjacent development on the old Ross or Red Rock Valley ranch] and advertising on TV. Were you in on any of the planning for those things, or were you consulted on any of that?

Yes. They took my husband in as consultant on all the cattle and when to move them, and on all the springs.

Were you consulted on any of the actual land sale of the ranch?

Yes, Dick was. They didn't do anything without consulting Dick on it.

So really, in essence, it wasn't just torn away from you. You maintained a tie and could see its graceful demise from a ranch into subdivision area.

Yes.

You were telling me off the tape about how Norm Biltz would get people to come into the business.

He was a financier.

You were saying that when he was out at the ranch talking to you he would be making notes.

He'd make notes, and then when he'd get to town he'd call these men and tell them he had a good prospect. He told us that he had called men the same way when he put Donner Lake together, and he said, "I told them that within 8 years they would have their money back. And in 3 years' time, they had their money back." He was a real salesman.

You respected Mr. Biltz?

Oh, yes. He was a nice guy. He knew everyone. You didn't have to have anything written down. He had a memory that was never-ending, and he was good in business.

Were you familiar with and aware of at the time that Mr. Biltz was responsible for bringing a lot of millionaires into Nevada?

That's right. He brought them in when he developed Donner Lake. He was one of them that, while he didn't hold the office, he was politically responsible for having no inheritance tax in the state of Nevada, and that's what brought all these millionaires in here.

He helped lobby against an inheritance tax?

That's right. We always claimed that he was the one that did it.

This started around the 1930s. Do you remember any reaction from people you knew to all these millionaires coming into Nevada, all these outsiders moving in?

Oh, they thought it was very good, because they were going to bring prosperity to the state of Nevada.

So at least the ranchers and people you mixed with didn't have any antagonism about outsiders coming in?

Any enmity whatever, no. Not at all.

How did you come to purchase this place you have here?

Well, we knew Preston Hale, and he took us all around to ranches.

A realtor?

Yes. We definitely wanted a place large enough for 3 favorite riding horses.

But not so large that you'd be tired out working it.

That's right.

Was this area here on Monte Vista—south end of Reno—built up a lot when you bought?

I don't know if it was built up, but there were 2 houses. [laughter]

Two! It wasn't built up. [laughter] When was that?

We came in in 1966.

How many acres do you own here?

We own 3 acres.

Did you build the house here, or was it built?

No, we didn't. It was built by a man with a rheumatic condition, and we felt it was very well built.

How did you find the transition from being an active ranch woman to being a lady of leisure, so to speak?

Yes, so to speak. [laughter] Well, I don't know. After we moved in we took a nice long trip to South America and were gone 6 weeks. We were pretty well settled, but I was working toward both when we first left the ranch and came in. My husband had some cattle; he was feeding cattle. We rented the Evans's ranch from A. J. Flagg, right out at Bordertown. We had that ranch for, oh, several years.

This was at the same time, after you'd sold the Red Rock and moved in here?

Yes. But we didn't raise any more cattle. Dick fed the steers out and the heifers, and then we went on the trip.

Was that just to keep his hand in ranching and to keep him busy?

That's right—and so we wouldn't have all the income at one year, too.

You put some of the sale money, then, into leasing another place, and it helped you on taxes.

Yes.

What have you done to keep busy since coming off the ranch?

I took up painting. Of course, I was well acquainted with many women in here, and I joined the [Washoe County] Homemakers for a while.

Did you paint at all out on the ranch? Did you even know you had this talent?

Well, a little. Mrs. Gertrude Eagle from Milford was the one that started us. She had painted for, oh, 18, 20 years in Los Angeles. She came up there, and a neighbor built a beautiful home, and just about the time they were ready to move in, she [the neighbor] found out she had terminal cancer. Mrs. Eagle started her painting. I was down there one day visiting and talked about the painting, and she said come down. But that's when gas was rationed, so I went down once a month for a little while and then I kind of dropped it, more or less. When I come to Reno, why, I looked up painting again.

You've kept pretty active in that?

Yes.

Are you still active in Make It Yourself With Wool?

No, not at all, sorry to say.

You've put together, more or less, the genealogy of the Dickinson family. Would you like to tell me about that?

Well, Grandad came over here alone first.

Who was Grandad?

Mr. Sophus Petersen. He came over and crossed the Plains with another man—my husband could tell you his name—but he had been out west before. They bought oxen back East, and Grandad Petersen wanted to get horses. He thought they'd get out here faster.

Do you know the year this was?

It must have been about 1850. It had to be.

Why did Sophus Petersen leave Denmark?

There was only a certain number that could make a living there, and he come from a good-sized family. Now, I don't know how many were in the family, but I do know that they mentioned sisters and brothers and what have you. As they grew up, the elderly people would leave the ranch to the oldest one, if they wanted it, of course. Even in those days, the talk was go to America. Everyone then as now wanted to come to America. Grandad wanted to come and try his wings, as we say, and so he came out and met this man. Whether it was someone from Denmark, I couldn't tell you, but he did have communication with Mr. [Bob] Nelson that came from Denmark, and he was in Nevada—in Reno. He lived here and had a little store [Nelson & Petersen Reno Cash Store] down there just between Third and Fourth Street on Virginia Street, where the Eldorado is now. They had this country store, and they carried practically everything.. .no yardage or anything, but everything that you would need in the home, and they did have a little bit of small machinery and things. Anyway, he landed in New York, and from there for Illinois for a little while. I guess he didn't care for it, or just what was the reason, but he wanted to come west, anyway. He contacted this man that had been out west before and he was going to come back. And so they started buying oxen for the trip, and a wagon. Grandad wanted to buy horses,and he told him, "No." He said, "We don't want any horses. We'll pass every one of them before we hit the Humboldt."

Grandad couldn't understand that, but they explained that the reason for that is that horses would stand up and eat all night. Cattle don't; they eat in the evening and then lay down and chew their cud. They don't get leg weary; the horses get leg weary. Before they

hit the Humboldt, they passed every one of the wagon trains.

That's an explanation you don't read about in the emigrant journals. They don't tell that.

That's right. That's the reason that they all came out with the oxen. It took them 3 months to come out, but Grandad went to the San Francisco area first, and he didn't like that down there. When he landed down there it was in the fall and it rained quite a bit, and he'd had enough rain in Denmark.

Did he come here to be a farmer? Was he a farmer back in Denmark?

Yes, they had a farm.

He came here to America intending to farm?

Yes, intending to farm. But the fall that he spent in San Francisco was foggy and rainy. He did not like that because he said he had enough of that in Denmark.Besides that, he wanted to see Mr. Nelson. He wanted to talk with him, too.

Was this Mr. Nelson from his hometown in Denmark?

Yes. They came from Tveed, Denmark. He came over in about 1840—he left Denmark. We don't know much about the home life there other than they had a big family and they had plenty to eat, but they were not wealthy at all. Many residents of the Reno area came through Reno on the way to San Francisco and a lot of them would stop [and stay]. So there were a lot of Danish people here.

The Germans settled in Gardnerville, went up by Gardnerville way. Later, a lot of the Italians came and settled in Reno. But when Grandad was here, at first, there were very few from Italy that were here. But when he came back and visited with Mr. Nelson, why, he decided that he'd stay in Nevada area. He went out; he went all over the meadows [Truckee Meadows] and up to Virginia City, and he did buy small pieces of property here on the meadows at different times. But he wanted...I guess the big dream was to get a large acreage or something, because they'd been used to small farms back there in Denmark.

In 1852, why, he went out to the ranch, and he bought the 450 acres that had been homesteaded by the Pierson family. They had come here 2 years before from Sweden; they were middle-aged at that time. They had these 2 children, one girl that was about 15, 16, and then they had one boy. They talked, Grandma said—the people around there—-talked about other children, but the family themselves never said much. The other children must have been a little older and gone.

The Piersons had a dairy, and they would put their dairy cattle on the 450 acres, which was a meadow, and leave them there approximately 7, 8 months, during the summer and fall. They made cheese. They kept their milk and made cheese the Swedish way. It was kind of a dry, white cheese. In the fall, they would go down to Standish. Standish was where everyone went, and they would make a circle with their wagons and they'd live out of the wagon all winter, because Standish, while it's close to other places, it had very little snow.

Now, Standish is...?

Just east of Susanville, a little bit south and east of Susanville.

Is it still there?

Yes, oh, yes. Quite a little place there now. They'd go down there. In Susanville, it was considered desert. They'd go down there, and there were a lot of people that joined them from Susanville.

Susanville was there at that time?

Yes, but not too many families. They had fruit trees, and you can read that in the Lassen history.

They had a lot of fruit trees, and they would come down there in the fall. Then the Indians from up by Alturas and all up in that area would come down in the fall, and they would trade them hides and furs and things for the fruit and vegetables that they raised in the Susanville area, because it was really farming, which the Piersons didn't do much of. They just had enough garden for family use, the dairy and milked the cows and made the cheese. Even on the ranch they lived mostly in a large tent, I guess because they did move; I don't know. But they'd build this circle.

Then the first winter that the Piersons were there, why, they had a very late frost in Susanville. When the Indians come down to trade for the produce, why, there wasn't any fruit and there was very little produce. So they [Indians] killed over half of them from Susanville, because they thought they [whites] were trying to starve them. They thought it was done purposely. They didn't realize the frost had taken the apples. But they would dry peaches and apples and pears and just like you would buy the dried fruit now. Well, they didn't have any, you see, and so it made them mad and they killed a lot of them.

But the Piersons, as I say, Grandma thought that they had the 4 children, they had the 2 older ones, but they had the 2 with them. The next winter they went down—the second winter; they spent 2 summers at the ranch—the second winter they went down to Standish, the girl had married and moved to Gold Run down by Sacramento where they were panning for gold. The Piersons left the ranch in October or November—they didn't know exactly which—and down by Constantia, where the tules are and the Long Valley Creek runs through there they were overtaken by 2 Indians. They killed them both, but the boy, the 10-year-old boy—his name was Denver—hid in the tules. How Reno got word of it I don't know. I haven't any idea. But Reno got word of it, and a few of the army men went out and overtook the Indians and killed them. They were on their way to Reno, and they killed them up here just close to Black Springs now. There's a mine shaft there; the mine shaft is still there by the Western Pacific railroad. They threw their bodies down the mine shaft.

But Denver, then, became the youngest landowner in the state of Nevada. The government sent the boy to his sister down in Gold Run, [California]. I don't know if they took over—or whatever word you'd say—they took over the investment that they had in out there for him; they were the agents for his real estate. Shortly after coming to Nevada, Grandad Sophus Petersen heard.... His name was Pedersen in Denmark. But when he come to the United States, the American version was Petersen, so he changed his name to the Petersen. And so Grandad stayed around the Reno area for quite a while—lived off and on with the Nelsons, Bob Nelson. Mrs. Bob Nelson was the one that was from Denmark and knew the family over there real well.

So he stayed around here for a couple of years, and then he went east and back and forth and what have you. In 1852, why, the Bob Nelsons knew the Silas Ross family in Reno. Some of their relatives lived north out

there close to the Red Rock ranch, what we, in my time, called the Red Rock Valley ranch. Sophus went out there and met John and Mary Ross and their daughter, Mary. She was a schoolteacher. Anyway, he bought the Red Rock ranch in 1852 from the government.

Do you know how much he paid for it?

No. We haven't any idea. Now, maybe Dick knows something about it, but I don't know. But he bought the main part, about 600 meadow acres. He bought the 450 acres that' s the meadow, and then he bought some right close there that surrounded the area. He went out there just in the summertime, and shortly before fall, he built a rock and sod one-room cabin. We finally used it for a garage.

When Sophus is in Reno, before he goes to the ranch and buys it, and during the winters because you say he went out in the summertime, what was he doing in Reno to live?

I don't know. Whether he worked for Mr. Nelson or what I couldn't tell you. But he built a one-room sod cabin on the south hillside as close to the spring as he could.

Was there any evidence of that sod cabin?

Oh, yes. It was still there.

When you sold the ranch?

Yes. They used it for a garage and a storage.... Dick's mother and father used it for years and years for a garage.

And it was still sod and...?

Sod and rocks, yes. They had good-size rocks and they built them sturdily, too.

Yes, you raise rocks in Nevada, I think! [laughter]

[laughter] They hadn't done any surveying out there at that time, and so the Indians would come every little while, every so often, and tell him, "Gee-whoa-haw." That means, "You leave, you leave." So then he'd leave. There was nothing else to do; there was nothing to prove that he had it or anything. They did this frequently, he said, for a couple of years.

Were they hostile when they did that?

They just wanted him out of there. It was their land. I guess it had traveled through tribe and tribe—that the white man was taking their land, see. They didn't want him out there.

Do you know what the Indians would have used the land for, specifically?

No, I don't know. You know Miss Grace Dangberg claimed that the Indians never did anything for the land, never used the land at all. If you've ever read her books, she didn't believe in the Indians coming back and being paid all this amount of money and everything at all, because I went to 2 or 3 different talks that she gave.She said they didn't do anything with it. They would use the land; they were out on the desert in the wintertime.

Not too long ago, they found where they crossed by, oh, that lake out here south of Reno—Topaz Lake. Just recently they found a lot of relics out there where they had crossed. Evidently, the lake was way down at that time. Before Los Angeles took the water the lake filled up, and they never found exactly where they crossed to go up to Lake Tahoe. But she said that they would gather seeds and everything they could gather, and they fished

out of the lake. Then when the grass was high enough for them to feed their cattle and all, they moved up to Lake Tahoe and they fished there. They never planted a seed, according to her. They never planted anything; they never retained anything that was there.

Was this before the white man or after the white man came in?

After the white man...I mean, all during this time that they were moving around.

After the white man came there, the Indians could have learned how to farm, but they didn't?

That's right. They did not. She said they never replenished anything. All they did was take. You can read her books because it's in there, the history. As I understood, she studied the history of the Indians and the history of Nevada. Yes, you talk to her. Is she still living?

Yes, she is. She's still very active.

She just gave some beautiful lectures. But, of course, she influenced all of us a great deal because she knew so much more about it than we did.

Down in Carson Valley they had more interaction directly, with the Indians, from what it sounds like, whereas up in the northern parts.... That's why I asked what the Indians might have wanted the land for when they wanted Sophus Petersen to leave because, as I understand it, they used that land more for just passing through and maybe occasionally hunting and gathering, where in Carson Valley, that valley was the traditional homeland for the Washoe down there.

Yes. Anyway, after Grandad was here a couple of years—1858—-the government came out and surveyed. At first, they just surveyed the meadow and what was his. By this time he'd bought a few cattle; he wasn't selling cattle. He just bought them. What he lived on I couldn't tell you, but maybe just [sold] enough to live on. He lived quite a little bit with the flosses.

Mary was a schoolteacher; she taught school, and I don't know if she taught in Reno—prominently in Reno—or just out that way. I couldn't tell you. But they were right there by Dry Lake. They owned that little ranch that's there now by Dry Lake.

Where's Dry Lake?

It goes dry every summer right out there over the first hill. You know where you come to the Red Rock Road?

The first Red Rock Road coming from Reno?

Yes. Now it's all Bordertown, and they've got that big town to the right?

OK, yes.

Just before you get to Bordertown there's a little ranch on the left. That was the Ross ranch.

And was Dry Lake...?

Where the water is now. But you'll see it dry, too.

I <u>have</u> seen it dry.

I have seen it dry many times. That's Dry Lake, to us. I don't know if they've got another name for it or not. Anyway, he courted her for

2 years, and he felt real smart. When she was 20, why, they were married, and he bought a milk cow, and he took her home to Red Rock ranch.They moved into the sod house. [laughter] That must have been quite a move!

Yes, one room.

When the Indians came that fall, why, Petersen showed them the government stakes, and they never came back and asked him to move off.

They never did.

They never came back after he once showed them the government stakes.. .I mean, to tell him to move. They accepted that. Mary's folks, in the meantime or during that time, had purchased this small ranch by Dry Lake. Mary and Sophus worked together, and they got permission from the government to graze the cattle on the range out there.

The government owned the land around the ranch?

Yes. Now, whether that permission came from Reno, the county or the state, I couldn't tell you. But I doubt very much if they even had formed a county then. I don't know.

Eighteen fifty-eight it was still Utah Territory, Western Utah Territory. So the permission could have come from Salt Lake City.

Yes. I don't know. But they got permission to graze on the range.

Did they have anything like a lease fee, a grazing fee, at that time?

No, no.

You just had to get permission?

Yes, and they started their family with a boy, Ross. He was born, I think, in 1864. Then in 1865 a girl was born, and they named her Little Mary. In less than a year, why, the mother was pregnant again for the third time, and Sophus lost them both—mother and child—with a premature delivery in 1866. So Sophus was a widower with 2 small children.

That was pretty common back then, wasn't it, with child birth?

Yes, I guess so, and it wasn't very easy with 2 kids. So the Ross family took the 2 small children. They were there with the Ross people approximately 4 months when Little Mary died of diphtheria.Grandad Sophus said that he could do that good himself. Of course, he was brokenhearted and lonesome, too, and he went over and got Ross—took him back to the ranch to live.

Where is Little Mary buried? Is there a cemetery on the old Ross ranch?

I couldn't tell you. I have no idea where they buried her.

Where would Mary be buried, Mr. Petersen's wife?

I don't know; I haven't any idea. Maybe Dick knows. That never came into to my mind, and I never happened to ask, whether he brought her to Reno or what. I know she died on the ranch, so she probably hemorrhaged or something, because it was a premature baby.

Sometime during this period, when he had little Ross and had lost most of his family and everything, why, he was writing to his

sister Sophia [pronounced Sophia] Pedersen in Denmark. After her brother came over here she had married a Martin Mortensen. When Grandad offered them if they would come over and his sister Sophia would take care of the little boy and her husband work on the ranch, why, he would give them half the ranch and half the cattle. He'd worked them up to a few by that time. She was to keep house and take care of the child—share the work and the expenses, and he'd been building up his herd. In the fall of 1866 they joined Grandad on the ranch.

When they had been on the ranch about a year, why, Sophus Petersen wanted to go home to visit. Uncle Martin and Aunt Sophia said they would take care of everything—the little boy—[land] he could go back. He was to go back and be there for 6 months, during the summer when the cattle were grazing out on the range.

Martin Mortensen, his brother-in-law, asked him to go and see his baby sister, Krestine, who was at finishing school in Tveed. Their parents had died when the kids were quite small, I guess, and Krestine had gone to live with an older sister. The sister had married very well, and so her and her husband had sent Krestine to finishing school. There they were taught all the basics of homemaking: manners, cooking, baking, sewing, knitting, quilting, gardening and preserving, making cheese and butter, plus taking care of the barnyard fowls. It was a 2-year class, and that was always the chore of the woman—to take care of the barnyard fowls, over there. Shortly after Grandad arrived in Tveed, why, he went to see Krestine. She was a little, petite gal, beautifully dressed, and, naturally, a courtship started, during which time she thought it was just wonderful that he was from America. But she had, I think, about 2 months to finish her class. So she finished her class, and in 3 months they were married at a big Lutheran church wedding in Tveed. They lived with her sister for a month after they were married and getting ready to leave by ship for the United States.

Grandad told her that he would take her home to Denmark in 5 years; she could go back and visit them. When the 5 years was up, Sophus said that he had enough money, and he would like to take Krestine home to Denmark. However, in the meantime, the sister that raised her had died, and Grandma had 3 girls and Ross. She looked up at Sophus, and she said, "But Soph...."

He said, "I'll take you home."

She said, "But Sophus, this <u>is</u> home. I don't care to go back." Mostly because she had lost her sister, I think. Had her sister been living, she would have wanted to go home.

To go back just a little bit, before they left Denmark, Krestine had got pregnant. Within a week on the ship she developed a combination of morning sickness and seasickness, and I guess she was really very ill. The ladies on the ship did their very best trying to help her, and she said she prayed daily—first one day she'd pray to die,and the next day she'd pray to live.

When they landed in New York, Sophus got some kind of a city job; the city paid him. Now, what he did I haven't any idea. But he rented a little place for the 2 of them—a room, the way I understood it—and they stayed there for 3 months. When she was approximately 6 months pregnant, they crossed the continent to Reno.

Do you know how they got to Reno?

Yes, wagon train.

Do you where they started from?

New York.

Do you know if they came through St. Joseph or...?

Dick says they came by Salt Lake, Utah. When they got to Reno, they stayed and rested at Bob Nelson's home for 2 weeks. Bob Nelson (had) a grocery store and all, and they lived up above the store in his attic room—his storeroom— while they were in Reno.

Grandad borrowed a team from Nelson—wagon and the team—and loaded it with sugar, flour, beans, bacon and so on, and early one morning they set out for the ranch. She, of course, had never seen it; all she did was hear him rave about it. They rode all day across sagebrush and sand and through the junipers over rough terrain—no road, just a wagon trail. Shortly before dusk on the top of the hill that we call the sandhill, Sophus stopped the wagon, and he looked down. His eyes were just shining. He looked down over the meadow, so happy and proud, and he said, "Krestine, this is it."

She looked up at him, she was so tired and sick and all of it together, and she said, "Sophus, this is the last place, isn't it? There is no beyond, is there?" [laughter]

They used a couple of tents all summer. Every spare minute Grandad and Uncle Martin had, they worked on a small, new 2-room house. But just before it was finished, Aunt Sophia claimed the house.

Now, why did she do that?

She moved in. Well, she was a very forceful, almost greedy type of a person, I guess.

Was she much older than Krestine?

Yes, she was older than Krestine, too, you see. [Sophus] married a girl quite a few years his junior. She was just out of finishing school, and they [Sophia and Martin] had been married in Denmark when Grandad was writing them.

Did she get along very well with Krestine?

Yes, I think they did get along.

But she just figured she deserved the house?

She deserved the house. She hadn't had a house, and she deserved the house. Grandma, of course, she didn't want to have any problems, either. She was always a very quiet, neat, sweet little soul, even later years. She took the old sod house and let Sophia move into the new one. Grandma used to tell that the sod roof, during any windstorm, why, the sand would blow in. Grandma said they had food with sand or sand with food, whichever way you wanted to call it.

[laughter] One question I've always had, not having grown up in a sod house—did sod houses have a lot problems with bugs?

I don't know. Of course, we have a cold winter. We don't have the bugs they have in Sacramento.

Yes. But in the summer I would think it....

The dogs here don't have fleas and things.

That's true.

So, I don't know. I doubt that they had very many, I really do, because we were never bothered with bugs and stuff.

I was bothered a lot with field mice; they would come in in the fall just terrible. One year, I was going to get rid of the mice, and

the field mice, especially. They were in eating the grain, and Dick had just purchased a new load of feed for the winter for the cattle.

So I went out there with the poison for them—mothballs, crystals. So I put the crystals everywhere; however, I would put them in little cups. But it wasn't long when they'd pull the sacks off that the little cups got tipped over. Larry came home one time, when he was in here going to high school, and he wouldn't eat the butter. He said, "I don't know. It just tastes funny; that's all."

Well, finally, we decided that it tasted like mothballs or smelled like mothballs.So we cleaned out the whole thing, and he put the feed over in another shed, and we brought out fresh feed for the milk cows. We fed that up to the calves we were weaning. That's what it was; it was the crystals from the mothballs. But I did get rid of the rats. now, which is worse—field mice or milk that tastes like...I don't know! But they all kidded the devil out of me. Going back...that fall, then Grandma Petie had Sophie; she named her Sophie from Sophus. They couldn't call them [all] Sophia and Sophie and Sophus, and so they nicknamed her Polly. And 14 months later, why, she had Hedvig Magreda, Danish. They called her Hattie Margaret in English. Now, my mother's name was Margeret, spelled M-a-r—g-e-r-et, Mar-ger-et; she was Irish. But this as Margaret. Four years later, why, Grandma nearly died when Clara Martha was born. Dr. Marrous said there should be no more babies, and that finished her family.

Grandma Petie said she didn't know where or when Grandad learned the English, just traveling around the country, because he didn't know any when he left Denmark.

Did she know English?

No. Little Ross, his boy, taught her English. [laughter]

Where did Ross go to school?

Grandad bought books, and Grandma tried to help teach him. When he was in about the second, third grade—he went to school out there, completed 2 years of school—he came in and stayed with the Nelsons.

In Reno?

Yes. He would go home whenever they could possibly get him. But little Ross—or Ross, as they called him— taught Grandma the English language, and they visited frequently with the Ross family over at Dry Lake.

Grandma Petie said that Grandad Sophus did very well financially. There was good feed out there, and by that time he had learned the cattle and learned how to feed them in the winter, and he cut his hay, and so he was really accomplished. Grandma, of course, having gone to finishing school—she was a beautiful seamstress—bought material and dressed her girls. Some of the Reno ladies said that they were the best-dressed family in the entire area. Grandma could knit a glove, with the fingers in it, in one evening with lamplight.., by the kerosene lamp, and she used those little, tiny steel needles. And I can hear them clicking yet, when I stop and relax and just really think of her. She did beautiful, beautiful knitting. She was the one that taught me how to knit.

But both Grandad and her stepson, Ross, taught her English. Grandma was always a very happy person and satisfied with her life and took things as they come. She lived one

day at a time all of herlife and tried to teach her children the same way.

Now, Aunt Sophia Mortensen, she was never happy; she was never happy on the ranch. She had 2 boys, Chris and Martin, just about the same ages as Sophia and Hedvig; they were just right an there together. But all the time she complained of being lonesome—she didn't like this, and she didn't like that and she hated cooking. When Martin wasn't busy outside, why, of course, he'd help her inside and help her with the cooking, and he did all the preserving of the meat and everything like that, because she wasn't happy doing it. In the evenings, Grandma said, lots of times he'd do the churning, and he'd help her with the washing and stuff. As I said, when Sophie Petersen was born they had Chris. About 18 months later they had Martin, Jr. But when she came into Reno to have Martin, Jr., why, she claimed she'd never go back to the ranch. She didn't want to go back.

When was this?

I don't know.

She came into Reno to have the baby?

They always went to the Nelsons to have the baby. They were always very much afraid then—after the first grandma passed away out there—to stay out there and have the baby. They came into a midwife, I think. I don't know—I used to always go to dear, old Aunt Dooley and ask her things that I wanted to know. I know they came to Reno. It was up close to the university where she had him.

There used to be, from what I've been told, a maternity house on Sutro Street, between today's Oddie Boulevard and McCarran Street. Do you know anything about that?

No, I don't. The way they talked was that she "went up on the hill," so I thought it was up there close to the university. I don't know. I haven't really any idea to substantiate my words.

After she had the baby she didn't want to go back. Martin Mortensen asked Grandad to buy his half. He knew that they'd done real well, and Grandad was a man that saved. And if he [Grandad] would take care of Uncle Martin's cattle for a year or 2, he'd give all the offspring to Grandad, and he'd take just his cattle. In the meantime, why, he was looking for a place closer to Reno where maybe she'd be happy. Right after Martin was born, they rented a place from the Nelsons for the winter. The next spring, or about the time feed was pretty good, when he could take his cattle, they bought the place that is Boomtown now, because Uncle Martin sold to Boomtown.

What direction would that be? North of Boomtown there's the one right where that dead-end street...you turn onto Garson Road, and then....

Yes, that's the one. Yes, the dead-end street. That's the old Mortensen ranch.

Who owns that now?

Well, that's Martin's nephew; the youngest boy, [Martin's brother] Sophus Mortensen, had a boy—Ross, and he lives in the house that's to the right of the road just before you come to the dead end, going north. That's where young Ross lives.

They still ranch that, so they didn't sell whole place?

No, they lease that out.

Did they sell the whole ranch to Boomtown?

All but that little place where the house is. That used to be the old road, where the dead end is.

Now it's the back road, the scenic route.

That's right, yes. That used to be the main road to Verdi.

He bought that place up there and moved his cattle up there, and he used Dog Valley for his grazing.He had the permit all over Dog Valley.

He drove his cattle from what's now Boomtown into Dog Valley?

Yes, every spring. He'd bring them back. And he cut the hay there.

The big meadow up there?

Yes. There were other Danes up there... Carsons. The [Paul] Carson family lived up there—they were also from Denmark and had a big ranch and cut hay. They ranged the cattle in Dog Valley.

Now, which one is the Carson ranch?

Carson, as you go north on that dead-end road, there to the left, they have those 2 modern homes. That's the Carson ranch. But, anyway, they all worked together. When I first come to Reno, why, the <u>big</u> day was to go up and visit all the Danes up on the hill. [laughter]

Did they get together because they were Danish?

Oh, yes.

Do they still do that?

I really don't know. Yes, I think they do, up there. We're in contact with young Marie Carson.

Do you know why there were a lot of Danes around Verdi?

Well, good farming, good ranch country.

Were they in the lumber business at all?

I don't think so. Later years, Martin cut ice in the winter for Reno. They cut that dam up there, Boca Dam. He had the saws; I think they still have a couple of the saws up there that they sawed the ice with. It would be 18 inches thick. They had lots heavier winters and colder winters. He said that they would go to bed at night—clear down to Verdi they could hear the ice cracking on Boca. You know how it cracks? The noise it makes?

Yes.

They'd hear that cracking clear down to Verdi.

That is <u>cold</u>.

Yes. A couple of years after they moved up there to Verdi, why, they had another son, Sophus. They all stuck to that name Sophus or Sophia or Sophia. It was funny how they did.. .yes.

The neighbors were pretty close up there—one to 3 miles away. But Aunt Sophia

wasn't any happier up there than she was clear out at Red Rock, because she said that she had too much work, and she didn't have time to visit. They wouldn't come down there because she never went back to repay their visit, and so the people just didn't come.

Was she from a more wealthy family back in Denmark, more privileged?

No, I think less. She was just unhappy as a child. I've talked to her grandson many times, and he said, "Well, she was just always unhappy." He knew her just as an unhappy person.

I told you, or I think I told you, that the ranchers only used the bulls about 4 years. When Mr. Dickinson was ready to get rid of the bulls, when they had served their purpose for him, he'd bring them in to the slaughterhouse to have them killed—they usually used the bulls for making bologna and stuff—why, he would take out a couple of the best and keep them for the ranch up there at Verdi, because they only needed a couple of bulls. They'd take the couple of bulls up there, and they'd use them only one year because they had all their cattle in the fenced pasture. The next year, when he culled his bulls again, they'd do the same thing. That kept them exchanging bulls all the time, you see.

Do you remember where the slaughterhouse was in Reno?

Yes, just exactly where the turnaround is down by MGM in Sparks. Well, what I call the turnaround. You can go to Sparks; you can go to....

Oh, the interstate exchange.

Right there.

Do you remember the name of the slaughterhouse, who owned it?

Yes, [Nevada Packing House. Archie Iratchabal owned it.] I knew him for years. I just loved him. He was the nicest guy.

As the Petersen girls grew up, Grandma didn't want them to come to Reno to go to school right away, so they hired a teacher. She and her husband come [to] Red Rock, and <u>they</u> lived in the old sod and rock house. Mama Hattie tells about one winter when they had a really heavy snow; it would blow off of Mt. Petersen down over there, and it made it almost level. The teacher had a boy, and Polly and Hattie and the boy were on sleds. They'd come down that hill and over the sod house and of course, the sand would just roll into the house.

The teacher moved out there with her husband?

He worked on the ranch.

Do you remember the teacher's name?

No. I just read it yesterday down at Krestine's. Aunt Dooley had a little memory book, where you write in it?

Yes.

The teacher wrote in it to her, and Krestine has it.

But Grandma always had a nervous stomach. Whether she was allergic to some foods or.... Nobody ever found out about allergies in those days. She was small and slight and couldn't gain any weight, and taking care of her family, of course, all those years and making their clothes and making soap, and so.

Over in Red Rock Valley there were Indians. One squaw had a half-breed boy that

was school age. Then there were boys over [in Dry Valley]—one of them [Melvin E.] got to be a [district attorney] here in Reno—the [Andrew] Jepson family. Before this time the Petersens had hired their own teachers. Then the county came in [and] paid the teacher. But Red Rock ranch only had her half a year, and the other part was in Dry Valley—the Jepsons had the teacher—because it was too far for the kids to go. So the Petersens paid her half a year to stay on with them, and then they got a different teacher over in the other half. So they only had a teacher half a year. I don't think they would have ever gotten the teacher if it hadn't been for the Indians.

About that time, Ross Petersen left home and went to Reno to work, and he worked with Bob Nelson in the store. Later, Grandad Petersen helped him purchase half-interest in the Nelson store. He was much younger than Nelson, too, and relieved him of a lot of work. He worked there for a few years, and then after the earthquake, why, he wanted to go down to San Francisco, wanted to see it and figured it was going to build up and he'd have....

This is after the San Francisco earthquake?

Yes, 1907. [This was Ross Petersen's second trip to San Francisco. He had gone there several years before with his mother when she went to see a doctor for a health problem.]

After the girls finished the eighth grade out there, Polly and Clara came to Reno and lived with the Curler family and went to school. Grandma Petersen went down to San Francisco to try to see a specialist about her nervousness. So Hattie didn't come to town with them. Sophie—the one we call Polly—came to town and Dooley came to town to go to school. Hattie stayed out on the ranch to take care of her father. Her plans were to go to San Francisco and take tailoring. And....

How did Clara get to be called Dooley?

Dooley was the youngest one. There was Polly and then Hattie, and then Dooley—Clara.

I can't think of her middle name, now, jut the way she got her nickname was that there was a retarded boy here in Reno that fell for her. He came out to visit her whenever he could, and whenever she was home out there. She met him here at school, and she didn't have much to do with him, but he was just determined; and he was coming out there all the time. They always tell the story about one time he bought a brand-new suit and things at Sears, I guess, or one of the stores, and he came out with all the price tags on them! So he was really retarded. But his last name was Dooley. They nicknamed Clara, Dooley, and she carried that name till the day she died. No one knew her name. She was Mrs. Knox or else Dooley. Yes, everyone.

Old Mr. Rolland—Clark Rolland, the old grandfather Rolland—had the ranch down there. I don't know if his family had it before him or not, because Mrs. [Ida] Rolland was just about Dick's mother's age. She came from the middle part of the state as a cook, and she married Clark Rolland, and they had 4 boys. Old Mr. Rolland had a brother—Reggie, I think was his name—and he went with this Clara Petersen Knox for quite a while. He was quite struck with her. But he was a terrible drinking man, and he'd come to Reno with his little cart and horse, and when he got completely passed out, why, he'd climb into this little cart and the horse would take him home, clear out to Doyle.

That's better than you can do with a car these days! [laughter]

That happened many, many times. I thought it was quite interesting.

Anyway, Grandma went down to see the doctor down there. I don't know what he was doing for her or anything, but he wanted her to stay down there all winter. He thought maybe it was the high altitude. But during this time, late that winter, 1898, while Grandad was feeding loose, wild grass hay to the cattle an a severe windstorm, the wagon blew over and Grandad Petersen was crushed under it. The hired man—his name was Andrew—he come to Reno for the doctor, and he contacted Clara. While Clara and the doctor left by wagon in the snowstorm for the ranch, the hired man went to Verdi to get Aunt Sophia—Martin's wife—to go to the ranch to help Hattie nurse her father. Four days after the accident, why, the doctor notified Ross and Grandma down in San Francisco, because he felt that Grandad wasn't going to live. Hattie has told me many, many times that...said she never remembers him having a bowel movement, and he lived 2 weeks. So, you see, his intestines were all fouled up some way. He wouldn't eat very much, and they were trying very hard to get him to eat.

When the accident first happened, Hattie had sent Andrew, their hired man, over to the Winnemucca ranch to get one of the Dickinson boys to come and help take care of the ranch and the cattle, because this was during snow and feeding time, and one man couldn't do it all. so Owen Chapman Dickinson came to Red Rock. He was the second boy of 3 boys over there. It was Ben, Chapman, Eastman, and then a daughter by the name of Claire.

He was a very capable, big boy for 18. Big, husky, strong...and he'd fed cattle a lot. After Grandad passed away, why, Clara and Polly returned to school in Reno. Ross returned to San Francisco for a short time, and Hattie was planning to go down there and take the tailoring, but Grandma couldn't be left alone. She just took the death of her husband terribly for, oh, I guess a few years, really. In those days, when they settled the estate, the wife would get half and the children would get half. So Grandma got half of it and Hattie, Clara and Polly divided the other half. In other words, Hattie inherited one-sixth of the ranch. In 1900, Chapman and Hattie announced that they would be married, at the ranch. She definitely wanted to be married at the ranch and not in town.

Can we stop here a minute? How long had the Dickinsons been on the Winnemucca ranch?

I don't know...years. Grandad ["Tule Frank" Dickinson] was out there for many years and his wife, [Geneva] Ermina, would go to California every winter with the excuse to put her.... Chapman worked down there when he was a boy and went to school; he delivered papers and he worked on people's fences, anything that he could do down there. Then they would come up and spend a summer on Winnemucca ranch.

But he was a big kid, you see. He was 18 when he come over to the ranch, so he was out of school. That's why he was up there taking care of that, helping with that ranch when Hattie sent for him. They felt that Grandma should not be left alone out there, so Hattie stayed with her. Hattie didn't get any more education than the eighth grade.

When they were married, why, she used her sixth of the ranch for a down payment,

and then her and Chapman paid off the family—Grandma and the other 2. It was a good investment and they did real well... always.

The following year, in 1901, Frances Geneiva Dickinson was born, and in 1904, December 17, they had a boy, Lawrence Albert. When he was 3 days old, why, the family was so upset that he wasn't named Ross that they added Ross to his name. So he's Lawrence Albert Ross Dickinson.

Then, in 1910, Ross returned to Reno and worked for Bissinger hide company. He started room and boarding at a home on Liberty Street, here in Reno. It was run by Olive Meyer. Finally they married, anyway. But they were both over 45 when they married, so they never had a family.

In 1930, the year before I come to Reno, Bissinger hide company sold out, and the new company brought in their San Francisco employees, so Ross was without a steady job. And June 1931, Nevada passed and started gambling in Reno.

Cyril Knox, who was Clara Petersen's husband and owner and manager of the Washoe County Title Guaranty Company here in town, was made mayor pro tem by that time; he was on the council for quite a while. I think a Mr. Berrum was mayor then. Anyway, Cyril—we called him Mike—was Ross Petersen's brother-in-law. He knew he [Ross] was a good man and a strong man and very physically fit and scienced, and so he tried to get him on the police force. Well, the police force was all full at the time. He applied to the force, but when they needed in extra help, they would call him. So July the Fourth, Ross took special assignment in Reno—a lot of visitors were gambling.. .for the Fourth.

In August when the university opened, 3 men held up the night watchman and robbed the safe of all the students' deposits. In September.... They didn't catch them. But the officers had noticed around town that there were unfamiliar men at [Harolds Club gambling heavy and figured they might be the ones. They also figured—ahead of them a little bit— that they might rob [the] high school when it opened, because they got away with the other one.

Would that be Reno High School?

Yes. Reno High School, and at that time, it was on that street that goes up to the hospital, off of Fourth—West Street. When Reno High opened, why, they requested Ross to be armed and sit in the superintendent's office at high school. He had to go into this office before school let out in the afternoon and stay all night. He smoked a pipe all the time, and he was not supposed to smoke or anything. He wasn't to answer the telephone or do a thing. Just sit there and stay in the superintendent's office. They had a stairway that went down from the main floor opposite ways. One went down to the boys' locker room, and one went down to the girls' locker room. So he stayed there one night all night. He went home in the morning, and Aunt Olive was very worried about him.

He told her, he said, "There's nothing to worry about. I can hear every step."

Who was Olive?

His wife. She was the one that had run the boardinghouse. She had this home on Liberty Street and she made it into a boardinghouse, and he lived there. All the time he worked for Bissinger hide company he lived at her boardinghouse.

He said, "I can hear the teachers." He said, "One teacher didn't leave till about 5:00, and

I heard every step she took, so there's no use of you worrying."

The officers the next day presumed that he heard noises and he walked to the top of the landing, and when he stood at the top of the landing, he was shot 5 times. He fell to the floor...at 10:30 P.M. it happened, because his watch stopped at 10:30. The men came up from both sides; he was looking down one side, probably, and he was shot in the back and one in the neck. He only shot once, and shot the man right in the jugular vein and killed him. He was laying there dead. The other 2 left, and when the janitor came in at 5:30 A.M., he saw the confusion and called the Reno police, and they called Ross-Burke [funeral directors]. When Silas Ross came up to get the body, he turned him over and saw that it was Ross that was dead. He just about died, standing there. They had gone to school and lived in Reno area together for years and years.

At 7:00 A.M., when the police changed shifts and all, they notified the [Nevada State] Journal and they got out a special—extra—Journal. The little boy that lived next door that Aunt Olive and Ross had taken fishing to Pyramid[Lake] and everything all through the years, why, he come running in—he was a paperboy—and he said, "Auntie Olive. Ain't it awful? Ain't it awful?" She asked him what was awful, and he said, "Uncle Ross is dead." The police had never notified her.

Oh.

Yes. "Ain't it awful? Ain't it awful?" So of course, Aunt Olive almost fainted, and just about the time that she was sitting down to get her wits together a minute in the home there, the doorbell rang. She went to the door and it was Ross-Burke after his clothes to bury him in. She hadn't even been notified by the police, yet.

But anyway, Ross was a very great storyteller. Dick always said that if he made connections and all, he would've been a comedian today, a great comedian. The first day I met him, why, he asked me about being a nurse. He wanted to know what I did for constipation—for the patients who were constipated. He said, "You're sure now. Now tell me just what you do." And so I told him about enemas and we gave them laxatives and all, and he said, "Well," he said, "the Indians have a better thing than that." When I asked him what the Indians did he said, "Why, they just feed him grasshoppers and let them kick it out of him." [laughter] He was always doing stuff like that, just constantly. Jokes rolled out of him. But I never got to know him, only just the one half year. But they all talked about that and all.

He'd do anything for a laugh. One time Julius Schwarzchild—owned Bissinger at that time, [and Ross] used to go in there and eat his lunch in the hide house. I can't imagine anything like that. [laughter]

I can't, either! [laughter]

This Julius came in there to see him about something, and he was eating his lunch. So he took one of these old knives that you scrape the hides with and started peeling an apple with it. [laughter] "Oh, don't eat that, Ross!" he said. "Don't eat that apple!" He didn't intend to eat the apple, but he just got a kick out of that.

Yes, he'd do anything to get you to laugh.

When he was at the ranch, we used to take the folks home in his buggy. He dressed himself all [up], went out in the garden, stuck carrots out of his hat, went up and hid behind the rocks as you come down to the ranch. He heard this team coming, and so he ran out, and it wasn't the folks. It was these folks

from down in Long Valley that had to come through there. "Oh," he said, "I guess they thought I was crazy. So I just run, jumped in the back end of the buggy." [laughter]

Both children, Frances and Dick—as he's called most always—spent their entire childhood at the ranch. They hired a teacher each year, and they built a little rock house right by the kitchen door, almost. Carol Reising was their teacher for a long tame. I don't know the other teachers' names. But the hired man, Harvey Barnes, he would go up to the mountain, Gold Lake [above Graeagle, California] and he mined, in the summer. So he was gone in the summertime. But he'd be there every winter. He was working on the ranch for 37 years.

Anyway, Carol Reising—they used to kid each other all the time, and she was always getting the best of him, of course. So, one year, when he came down from the mine, and they were cleaning up his bedding and everything to put it away, why, she put a great big piece of Limburger cheese in the bedding.

First...he put Limburger cheese all over the doorknob going into her bedroom, and she couldn't figure where she was getting it.

It was wrapped up all winter long. When he opened it the next summer, he really had a mess. They always talked about that Limburger cheese deal.

Do you know where he mined up near Gold Lake? Did he work in an established mine, or did he just placer mine?

No, he had a mine of his own.

I don't know how good it was.

Well, he got something out of it every year. One time when the kids were little—something that city people don't think about and would never understand quite—[Dick's] folks came to town and told Dick and his sister and the schoolteacher that they would be back in time for dinner, and they told the schoolteacher [to] cook dinner. So [Dick and Frances] went out and Dick shot 2 woodpeckers. Frances cleaned them and they cooked the woodpeckers. When they sat down to the table, why, they told their parents that it was quail. The meat was just as black as your hat, and so, of course, they knew that it wasn't quail. They finally cornered them down, and they admitted that they had cooked the 2 woodpeckers for dinner.

Do you have anything else that you'd like to talk about?

Well, when the Western Pacific used to... we'd load a lot of cattle or sheep—not just us, but many people did. Up in the northern part of the state of California, up around Likely and Alturas, they'd load their cattle and they'd bring them down to Reno to ship them on into San Francisco. They always had to stop in Doyle and unload them and water them. But just before they would get to Doyle, why, there was this old fellow over there, and I guess he started it. Some people said that kids did it later, but for a long time this elderly man supported himself—he'd sit up there with a .22 and he'd just kill off a couple of the lambs...just plop, plop. When they got into Doyle, well, of course, they'd be dead, but freshly dead. So they would unload them and drag them over by the edge of the watering trough, and he'd stand around there talking to the train men. The first thing you

know, why, he'd ask them if he could have them—why, sure, they were dead. So he'd go over and slit their throats and they'd bleed just like they would bleed if he had butchered them.

Were they open cars, then, that they shipped these things in on the train?

Yes, the slats.

So he could just take potshots and get lucky a couple of times?

Yes. He made a living on it. Finally, of course, they got wise to him. But I never heard of him going to jail or anything. They just told him to stop it—quit that kind of stuff.

Do you remember his name?

No, but Dick would know his name. Yes.

OK. Did you ship many cattle from Doyle on the train at all?

No, we drove to Reno.

OK. That's what you said, and I got to wondering after that conversation if you'd ever used the railroad.

We drove them into Reno. We had a lot of oil cake shipped into Doyle, because we wouldn't use a whole carload. Then the men would meet down there—[Gene] Rolland, and [Fred, Charlie and Leo] Galeppi, and us and sometimes [Frank] Evans—and they would divide up the carload of cake. Then we'd give the cake to the cattle in the wintertime. You controlled the amount of cake they ate by adding salt to it. They only ate it if it was so salty; when it got too salty, they couldn't eat it. So when they got enough salt, why, they'd quit eating the cake.

What was oil cake made of?

From powdered cottonseed oil. We'd always add the salt to it, and they took it out to the cattle in little feed bins with a tapered roof on it. You could leave it out there, and the cattle would come in and get their salt and their cake, too.

Like a salt lick now?

Yes, like a salt lick. Then, 1932, the first year I was there, why, Hattie and I had a large garden in the orchard—they still have their fruit trees—and so we canned and dried. Left carrots and beets and rutabagas and stuff in the ground and dug them as we needed them. But when the men rode and branded, Hattie and I rode, also—before the children arrived. Then after my children arrived we would take turns; she would go one time and I'd go part of the time, until the kids were big enough to go with us.Anyway, if she was riding and others were helping—they would ride and gather cattle and stuff—I would come out with the lunch and so they started calling me Wishbone, because I...the show. [Wishbone was the cook in the television show "Rawhide."] And that was quite a nickname for a long time—"Here comes Wishbone."

They had another nickname for you too, right, because wasn't Hattie called Mama Hattie?

Well, that came from when I was expecting Krestine. There was no one in this world

that ever really got along with Grandma Dickie—they all called her Grandma Dickie—Chapman's mother. She was just the type of a person that seemed to like turmoil. Whenever she'd leave, why, the whole family would be...take them darn near a year to get back together and be friendly again. She'd tell this one said that, one said this and somebody else said that and so on. So Mama Hattie said to me, she said, "I don't know. Your child can call me anything but don't let it call me Grandma Dick."

I said, "Well, it won't happen. I don't know what we'll name you, but it won't be Grandma Dickie."

So when Krestine arrived, I just called myself Mama Judie and her Mama Hattie. She [Krestine] was with Hattie half the time, and so she got to be known clear to Susanville—people their own age called her Mama Hattie and Pop Pop. Krestine couldn't say—or didn't say—Papa. We tried to call Chapman Papa because I figured it was easier to say and my father was Grandpa. But instead of calling him Papa, she called him Pop Pop. He was known [to] all the people in Susanville and everybody—"Where's Pop Pop today?" if we went up there and he wasn't there. Mama Hattie was Mama Hattie and I was Mama Judie. I was Mama Judie to all the 4-Hers. It made it kind of nice; it made it a little personal feeling than if they called me Mrs. Dickinson.

I have at least one more question, maybe 2 to ask you. At the University of Nevada in Las Vegas, there's the Dickinson Library. Are you familiar with that?

No, I'm not. We had a governor or something that was up at Carson for years by the name of Dickerson.

I was just curious if the Dickinson Library....

It's no connection to the family.

Another thing, I didn't know if you were interested, but we do have some beautiful lamps that Larry welded together, floor lamps—I'm having new shades put on them right now, but I will have them again—that he made out of horseshoes. And each horseshoe, I should say, has a story. One of them is the horseshoe from the old horse that they [used when they] went up and got the sheep, when McCarran gave them the sheep from up on top of the ranch. Then one is the horseshoe from the grandson of Trigger when Roy Rogers gave Dick the grandson of Trigger.

One time we were gone, and we had a man working for us by the name of Bob Atkins. Of course, he was smoking in bed, which he had promised never to do, and he was never allowed to bring liquor home. But when we were gone, why, he went over to Hallelujah and bought a bottle of liquor and come home and was drinking and smoking in bed, and he caught his mattress on fire. He was so drunk he didn't know just exactly what he was doing, and so instead of trying to put the fire out, why, he threw the mattress out the window and it burned down the bunkhouse while we were gone. When we come back, there wasn't any bunkhouse. [laughter]

Another time that come to mind was when Larry was about, oh, 10, 11, years old, and he was driving truck during haying for the men to pick up the baled hay. This one man was telling him all kinds of stories about "We did this, and we did that in Oakland." Larry would come home and before the men would come in to eat...why, he'd say, "You know that he killed 3 men down there in Oakland?" And I said, "Oh...."

"Yes. Down in the Oakland hills. Yes, that's true. That's what he said."

Well, just before we finished haying, I came to Reno, and on the way home I stopped

at Hallelujah. Harold Stoy said to me, "There's a couple of sheriffs here." He said they were going to come over to the ranch, and he said, "I told them that I thought you'd be in to go to Reno today. They want to talk to you."

So they told me that we had a criminal, or a man out there working and that he was just hiding out at the ranch. I asked them to not come over to the ranch, that we were going to be finished haying the next day about noon, and they said that he was a dangerous man and they didn't want to start anything by coming up there. I told them that my husband would bring them to town on the dirt road—on the old Red Rock Road—and I'd come around by the highway and let them know that he was on his way to town with the men, because we certainly didn't want any shooting at the ranch, if possible.

So that's what we did. He said to let them out at the service station there and not down in town. So my husband let them out on Fourth and Virginia at the service station and told them that he had to go down to Sparks for something or other. When they walked up Fourth Street about half a block, why, the sheriffs overtook them and there wasn't any shooting. They got them. Well, when we went home that night, why, I had looked for 2 weeks, I think, for my cutting knives out where we cut our meat and everything. They were under the bed of...those guys had slept upstairs; they had their knives and stuff up there all ready in case somebody alerted at night and came to get them.

Do you remember who those men were?

No, I don't remember. But they said that they would have a fight with some guy and one of these men would drive a car behind him and the other one'd drive a car in front of him, and they'd take him up on the hill in Oakland and just before they got to the very edge of the hill, why, the car in front would move over and then he'd go over the cliff. They said that they had definitely killed 4 or 5 men going over the cliff down there. That doesn't happen to too many people.

No!

Oh, I wanted to tell you one other thing. We were talking about neutering the dogs and cats. When I was in training, there were 3 boys in training, also, and I don't know how they ever got away with it. They used to go down the block and pick up stray dogs and all and bring them back and fix them. Then they would take them back and leave them on the doorstep.

So everybody that didn't want 50 cats, why, when I'd go down [to Susanville], I'd fix all their male cats for them.

Really!

Yes.

Well, you knew how to do it.

I do it here for the neighbors and all.

Did you use any anesthetic for that?

No. I did it in a stovepipe.

Do you want to explain that?

Well, I just put the animal down the stovepipe and have somebody hold its tail and legs and then I'd use a razor blade and cut them.

And you were doing that even way back then, when rural people were not all that concerned about dogs and cats?

Oh, yes. All the women had cats that they liked and were pets, and they didn't want a whole barnful of cats.

Did your children have a lot of pets on the ranch?

They always had a dog or 2.

[Some] thing that people in town are not accustomed to, Larry's dog disappeared one time. He was gone 3, 4 days. Larry was about, oh, 4, 4 1/2 then. I kept saying, "Well, where is he? Where would he be? I can't imagine where he'd...." We kept looking for him and calling him and calling him. Finally, about dinnertime, we were sitting at the table and Larry said, "I know where Tuffy is."

I said, "Well, where's Tuffy?"

We went out and he had him tied to one end of a fence post and another end of the fence post and he was going to brand him. Then he had forgotten to untie him.

Was the dog still alive?

Yes, the dog was still alive. But he was out there waiting, just far enough from the house so we couldn't hear him crying.

What kind of dog?

Tuffy was an Australian shepherd. A very faithful little dog for the boy. I don't know how he happened to.... [laughter]

Did you allow the animals inside?

No, never.

Most farm people I know never did, either.

Dogs or cats never came in, no. But they always had some. And we had quite a time with people dropping off dogs and cats. They'd drive out there to the gate, which was about a quarter of a mile from the house, and when we'd go out to milk, first thing you'd know, why, you'd see this animal dash across the yard or something. A few days, why, it was out there eating. Of course, the larger dogs—any of the dogs for that matter—we'd bring back to town to the Humane Society. But we had quite a time with that for years. In the fall, especially, when they'd come out deer hunting, why, they'd bring their animals and then leave them. They'd come in to the [ranch].

Then one time, oh, late at night, this man came in and he had a calf with him. He said he picked it up out there in the brush and he guessed the mother got lost, instead of realizing that they plant their baby. My husband laughed and said, "Well, now do you know where you got it?"

"Well, not exactly."

My husband went back with him to try to find out if he knew just where to leave it for the mother to find it, and the mother was there looking for it. We had that happen, oh, lots of times. Yes. People felt sorry for the calf because it was lost. [laughter]

I've asked you about lots of things. Is there anything, Mrs. Dickinson, that you'd like to talk about?

Well, when I went to the ranch and at the beginning of the ranch, we were so close to our loved ones. It was a closer knit family then than now when you can go so many places. Not that we don't have the love for our children at all, but you have a Sunday in Sacramento, you go skiing another Sunday, and another week I go visit my family up north for 2 or 3 days where it used to be when I was up there, I was up there for 2 weeks.

You're not with them as much as years gone by.

Life was entirely different. When I first went to the...we all had our own family tree, but there'd been many changes. Dick and I didn't experience the frontier days, as they are called now, and we didn't have any of the conveniences that we have either. We did live simply, but we lived well all of our lives. We had much more than I had as a child up north. We worked long hours, and we enjoyed life to the fullest and we enjoyed each other; we enjoyed being together. We never felt underprivileged—I don't think the term was used much at that time. We felt very privileged. We had as much, and sometimes more, than many of our relatives and friends and neighbors. Everybody lived about the same way. You had one real good dress that you wore when you went out to dinners, and we had everything we needed to be comfortable, we felt. We had parents that loved us, and we all worked together to make things better for all. We appreciated the material things in life, I think,.. more than they do now. So that was my feeling.

I put in a lot of pictures [in albums], and I would write under them, of course, who they are and what they are, and a lot of times if you take a look at the pictures, sometimes they say more than words, I feel. Much of the history of the ranch was before our time. It was told to us by our loved ones and a lot by Grandma Petersen because she loved to visit. She came from Denmark, and she loved to tell all about the ranch and what they did and how they did it and so on and so forth. So we had a very close relationship there. While she was older, she was just like a mother to me. It was funny.

My husband and I never dickered over things. If we had a good year and he sold quite a few cattle and I wanted something that I felt I could do without, why, if we had, as I say, a good year, I'd get it. But if we didn't have a good year, why, I'd wait. But this understanding...we had such a wonderful relationship together that way. We discussed everything, and we still do.

Yes, that shows. I've seen that interaction with you.

We didn't use the word lifestyle much—especially on the ranch. We nearly all lived the same. Life was busy, for some hard. Not much time for style. We milked by hand—separated and made butter the old way. Worried about drought in 1938. Moved cattle from here to there. Canned on the old wood stove in the intolerably hot kitchen. Hot, hot summers. Chopped and carried wood. I had 3 irons on the hot stove. We (some [of us]) didn't have water in the house—we even had an outhouse. Our life changed and improved [because of] electricity—irrigation, refrigerators, light and power—for, I guess, a better lifestyle.

I think the hardest part for me to get used to at the ranch was the spring housecleaning.

Really? Why?

Well, we cleaned the rugs, and we took everything off the walls, and we redid furniture. We had about 4 of those high-back beds, just beautiful beds. Hattie and I both wanted things modern, so we cut them down. They were just valueless after we cut them down. They'd be worth quite a bit of money now.

Yes. You don't think about those things.

No, we never thought about it then. Then the one other thing that was hardfor me was the going out to the milk house.

Yes. You told me about the frogs!

But the spring cleaning included the rugs. There was no nailed down carpets. The rug was large enough to cover the entire floor, practically, and extremely hard to carry, and we had to carry that out to the clothesline. We left it hang there for a while, and we beat it, to beat the dust out of it. Then, of course, we had to wallpaper a couple of the rooms, and we had to paint the rest of them. think that was the hardest part.

Every year?

Yes. And, of course, Dick's father always claimed that we threw out half of the good stuff and kept half of the bad. But that was life on the ranch [laughter].

All in all, though.....

Oh, I wouldn't trade it. I feel sorry for these women that live in town. They have nothing to do, in the first place. There's no wonder a lot of them get to drinking and playing cards.. .1 have a very dear friend that plays cards... well, 4 times a week, I guess. To me, it is such a waste of time. I want something to see that I have done something. I think that's why I go into fancy work and my knitting and painting, because I want to utilize my time to a profit—not necessarily a money profit, but a profit. I don't want to just sit all afternoon and waste my time or visit.

The woman that just has moved in across the road, now, for about 3 months and she said, "I never see you. What do you do?" She said, "You never come over and visit."

Well, ranch women, like farm women back where I'm from, didn't have the time.

No.

There was always something to do.

When I come to town, I utilize my time on something else. I do a lot of needlepoint and the painting and that type of thing that I don't needthe cards and things.

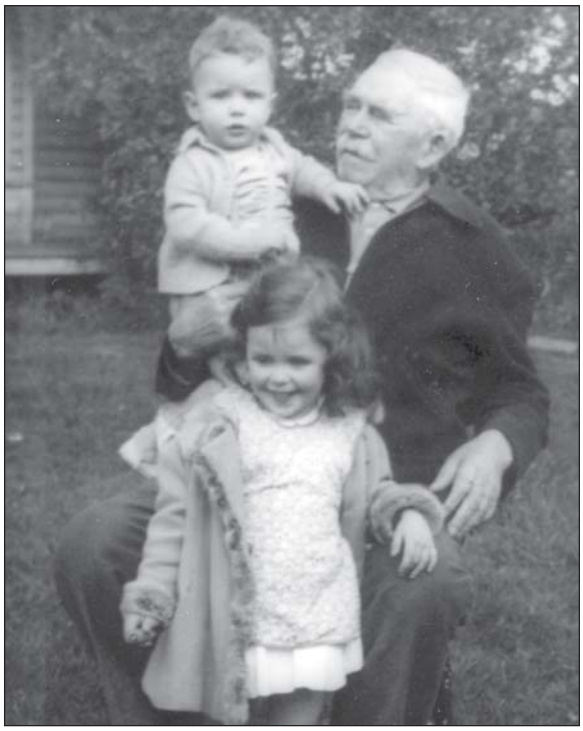
I want to thank you very much for sharing all this with me.

Yes.

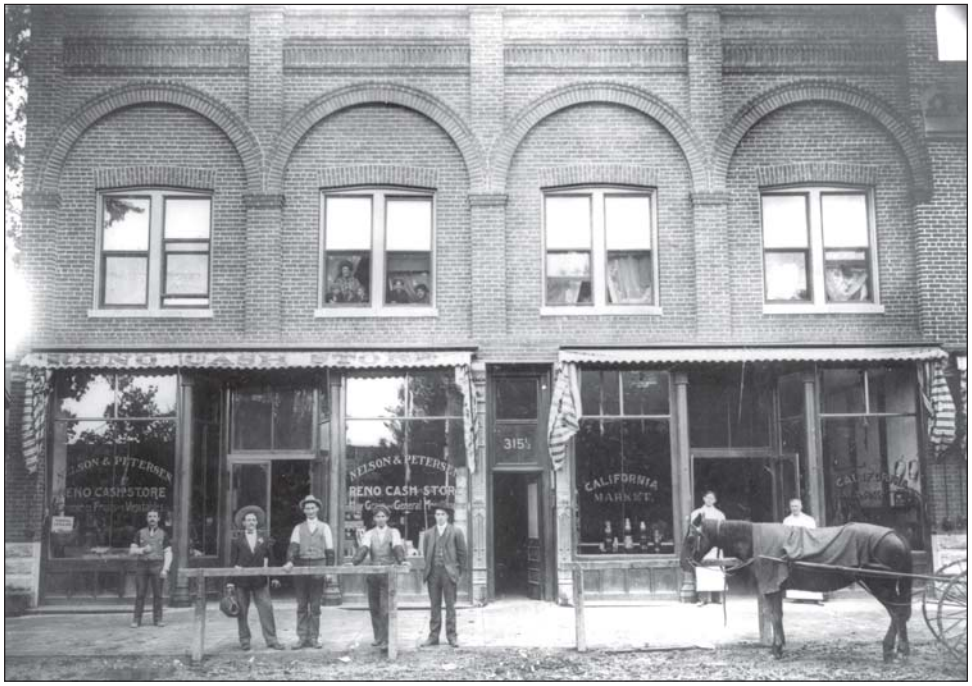
Photographs

Johnston family portrait, 1910. Seated: Mr. Maxwell Johnston, Judie, Orbie, and Mrs. Margaret Johnston. Standing: Myrtle and Pearl.

Judie with her Model A
Ford Sport Coupe, 1930.



Grandfather Maxwell Johnston
with Larry and Krestine, 1941.



Nelson and Peterson Reno Cash Store, 1922.
Left to right: Bob Nelson, unidentified, Ross Peterson, Bert Lynn, unidentified.

Judie and Lawrence's first house, moved two miles
from the meadow to the main ranch complex, 1931.

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